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ABSTRACT

This serial issue contains a total of 26 articles grouped under five headings: "Adult Learning: A Key for the Twenty-First Century (Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Confintea V))"; "Trends in Adult Education Policy" (Belanger); "Adult Education in Modern Times" (Geissler); "From Criticism to Constructiveness" (Torres); "An Uninvited Speaker Is Asked to Leave, But He Doesn't Go..." (Aramendy); "Small Farmers of La Cocha" (Calle); "The Botina de la Cruz Family Farm" (Corrales et al.); "Poison in the Home" (interview with Javier Souza Casadinho); "Productive Terracing in Coelemu" (Loguercio); "The Use of Green Manure by Small-Scale Farmers" (Bunch); "Women's and Men's Informal Sector Enterprises in Nairobi, Kenya" (Karugu, Otiende); "Situation of Women in the Informal Sector. The Example of Rwanda" (Burckhardt); "Informal Training and Socio-cultural Regulators in Small Enterprises in New Delhi" (Singh); "Skills in the Informal Sector in Lima, Peru" (Bakke-Seeck); "Can Community Projects Sustain Local Literacy Efforts?" (Herbert); "Literacy and Language" (Robinson-Pant); "New View of Literacy: My experience in Adult Education Practice in Nepal" (Nwangwu); "Internal Funding for Literacy" (Mbuagbaw); "Executive Summary from Adult Literacy in America" (Kirsch et al.); "International Literacy Watch. Warning against Lip-Service" (Chiba); "Training of Communication Workers in the Area of Popular Radio Broadcasting" (Gutierrez); "'La Senal': An FM Radio Initiative"; "Study Circles on HIV/AIDS for Africa. Swazi Women Gain a Public Voice." (Oliver); "Darien--The Map of Participation" (Gonzalez et al.); "Violence and Impunity - Our Daily Bread" (Palma); "Education for Minority Tribes: Hope for Success" (Das); and "Participatory Training for Promotion of Social Development" (Acharya, Verma). (SK)

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ADULT EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

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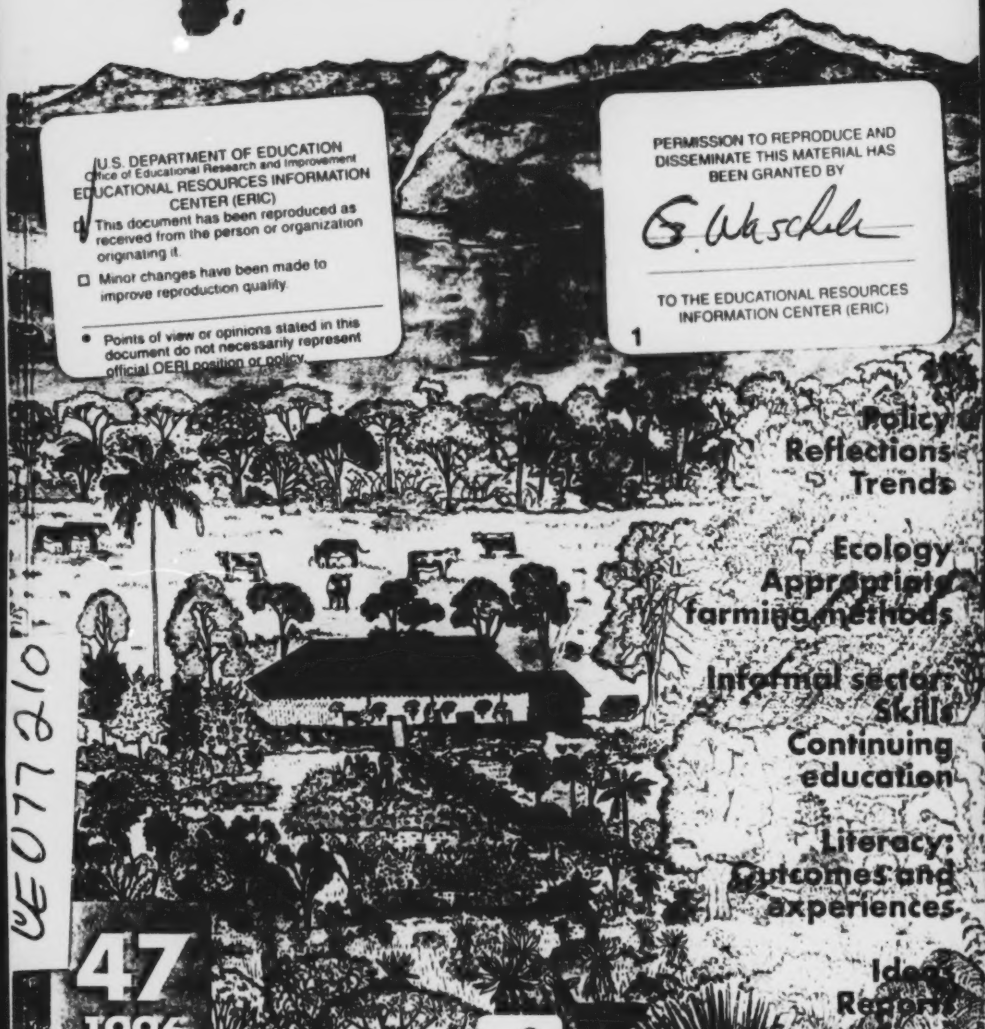

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ADULT EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

is a half-yearly journal for adult education in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At first, in 1973, the journal was intended by the German Adult Education Association (DVV) to help keep in touch with past participants in DVV further training seminars and to support the work of projects abroad. Today, the journal is a forum for dialogue and the exchange of information between adult educators and authors in Africa, Asia and Latin America, both among themselves and with colleagues in the industrialised nations. It is intended to disseminate and discuss new experiences and developments in the theory and practice of adult education. The main target group consists of adult educators working at so-called middle levels in teaching, organization or administration. Increasingly, staff in related fields such as health education, agriculture, vocational training, cooperative organizations etc. have been included, as their tasks are clearly adult education tasks. We also aim at adult educators at higher and top levels, academics, library staff and research institutions both in Africa, Asia and Latin America and in the industrialised nations.

We herewith invite adult educators from all parts of the world to contribute to this journal. Articles should bear a considerable reference to practice. All fields of adult education and development can be treated, i.e. adult education should be regarded in its widest sense. We kindly ask you to send us articles of about 1500 words; footnotes should be used as sparingly as possible.

Responsible for contents are the authors. Signed articles do not always represent the opinion of the German Adult Education Association. You are invited to reproduce and reprint the articles provided acknowledgement is given and a copy is sent to us.

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ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Editorial

Big events cast long shadows. Next year, in June 1997, UNESCO will hold its Fifth World Conference for Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in the city of Hamburg, Germany. Unlike the previous UNESCO World Conferences, the one that is forthcoming will not be a predominantly governmental convention with a restricted number of NGOs attending as observers only. So-called »civil society«, in which we all take part as citizens and in our work, has learned to make itself heard. Our contribution to the development and implementation of ideas and concepts has come to be far more acknowledged today than it was in former years. The organizers of the Hamburg Conference have taken this into account and are planning an event at which government and civilian entities will have an equal share in representation from the participating countries. Therefore, wherever we engage in adult education, in state institutions or private organizations, we should seize this opportunity and take the necessary steps to make our cares and concerns known so that they will be considered at the Hamburg deliberations.

We are watching adult education pass through times of crisis the world over in more ways than one. Funding is growing ever more scarce. Formal basic education has become the centre of focus of international educational policies. The World Bank is concentrating on elementary school projects. And national policies have come to reflect those trends.

As adult educators, we cannot remain indifferent in the face of this situation. Therefore, and not just because the conference is scheduled to take place in our own country, we at IIZ/DVV have a keen interest in the success of CONFINTEA and the prospect of a change in the direction of educational policy that will bring us into the next millennium. We assume that you, too, have begun a process of reflection and discussion that will help you establish and formulate your own positions on adult education — as well as those of your respective countries — in order to emphasize its on-going relevance for yesterday's children who were deprived of adequate schooling so as to ensure that they are not simply forgotten in the concentration of resources on the children of today. We have decided to take the opportunity of the present issue to publish the Official Conference Agenda together with a list of the scheduled thematic roundtables in hopes that it will serve as a guide for the structuring of position papers.

We invite you to send us any documents that you prepare to present your concept of the role that should be ascribed to adult education in the coming years, and your opinion of what needs to be done in order for adult education to be able to assume that role. We plan to have our next issue of Adult Education and Development available in good time before the World Conference. We intend to publish as a supplement to that issue a compilation of the findings, views and suggestions that we receive from the various regions and organizations.

The last issues of our journal, to a large extent, were theme oriented, concentrating on such important topics as participatory evaluation, world-wide trends in educational research, and development-oriented adult education. Much as our work requires pauses to consider and clarify its underlying theories and concepts, we have always intended the pages of our journal to serve as a forum for adult education practitioners, from the South in particular, to share their experiences and benefit from the experience of others. During the interim shift in focus to questions of theory, many immensely interesting accounts from adult education praxis have been accumulating in our editorial office. The time has come to turn back to the practical side of our work. Thus, the present issue, as well as the next, will dedicate more space to articles that, in our opinion, are exemplary presentations of concrete approaches to vital areas of adult education.

It is fortunate, in a way, that practical experience does not grow obsolete from one week to the next. Because the improvement of learning and living conditions for all people is a long, seemingly endless struggle. Social problems tend to be persistent, and remedial policies more often than not fall short of their aims, or are only local measures directed at restricted groups or individuals. Therefore, adult education faces the same questions and challenges over and over again. It is a constant search for solutions to the basically unjust social set-up of the world that denies the majority of its population sufficient access to the resources they need to lead decent lives. It is a search that yields an unlimited variety of approaches to help make the interests of the poor heard, to enable them to obtain the best results from the meagre means at their disposal, to secure access to their land, to ensure sustainable use of that land, to protect their environment, to gain access to credit and markets for their products, to participate in the economy and society of the world around them and yet maintain their own culture, to protect themselves against official or unofficial assault and assassination, to achieve gender equality within their own work and organizations, to learn what they need to know but never had the chance to learn at school, and to secure a better world for their children where education, housing, health, a sound diet, a safe and intact environment, employment, sufficient income, and peace are guaranteed not just for some but for everyone.

Hopefully, some of the articles published in this issue will give some of our readers new ideas for better concepts toward the achievement of this universal goal.

Michael Samlowski

The cover design is a detail from an educational poster drafted by Zoraida and Alicia Calle, Colombia.

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Beverly Benner Cassara (ed.)
Adult Education
Through World Collaboration.

There is a critical need for the education of adults in the world today, in both industrialized and nonindustrialized countries, for the formally educated as well as the unschooled. New understandings and new methods are required to meet new situations. Those who would engage in global collaboration in adult education need current information about what is happening in the field. This book brings together information about the philosophies and the work of the major donors in the cause of adult educaiton in developing countries, past and present; the changing attitudes of the recipient countries; the collaborative work of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). Part One of this book ist devoted to the work of multinational organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental; Part Two explores bilateral aid; Part Three is devoted to the work of the ICAE.

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Fifth international conference on adult education (Confintea V),
Hamburg, Germany, 14 - 18 July 1997

Adult learning: A key for the twenty-first century

A UNESCO conference in cooperation with international partners

I. Historical context

UNESCO has, since its inception, shown serious interest in adult learning. The General Conference, at its Second and Third Sessions held in Mexico City (1947) and Beirut (1948), decided to call an international conference devoted to the problems of adult education. This special conference was held in Elsinore in Denmark (1949). It was followed by three other conferences in Montréal (1960), Tokyo (1972) and Paris (1985).

Common issues

During these 45 years, each of the four conferences has reflected the concerns and particular trends in the world over the preceding decade. They have addressed the following issues as high priorities for adult, nonformal and continuing education:

- achieving universal literacy · establishing peace and international cooperation · creating a genuine spirit of democracy · increasing learning opportunities for all age groups · promoting gender equality · contributing to sustainable development.

In the 1960s, with the growing pace of decolonization, new priority issues were included such as:

- international cooperation to support developing countries
- the involvement of NGOs
- reflection on aesthetic and moral values
- the role of science and technology in social progress
- the relationship of adult learning to initial education.

During the 1970s, emphasis was put on the quality and the accessibility of adult education. The concept of lifelong learning became a central issue, coupled with the concern for some of the major world challenges such as population growth, the environment, occupational and vocational training and the role of the media in adult education.

In continuation of these trends, the last Conference in 1985 stressed key issues such as:

- the intensification of the struggle against illiteracy under a renewed alliance between governmental and non-governmental institutions
- the high priority that should be accorded to women's education
- the linking of formal and non-formal education in the perspective of lifelong learning
- the decisive impact of the modern media on learning
- the need for creativity and innovation in adult learning
- the concern for functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries.

The present context

Since then, the demand for adult and continuing education has been rapidly expanding, and the diversification of educational responses has clearly evolved. Yet, the inequality of learning opportunities remains a serious constraint. More attention needs to be paid to three problems: access to learning opportunities at all levels, high-quality adult and continuing education programmes/ projects, and means of ensuring of fair participation in education and training programmes.

Today, the increasing diversity of adult learning opportunities and the multi-dimensional character of the issues, and the multiplicity of actors involved, have not only given rise to the need to convene the Fifth Conference, but have enlarged its concept in order to involve the various partners in its preparation and organization, and in the implementation of the conclusions.

In the present context therefore, it is no longer possible to hold an International Conference on Adult Learning without the involvement of other UN specialized agencies, multi-lateral and regional intergovernmental organizations and without representative regional preparatory meetings, in the same way that it is no longer feasible to convene a national conference on adult education without the participation of the different ministries, social partners and non-governmental organizations, and without the involvement of local communities. Adult continuing education has always been an important issue at ILO and OECD. Adult learning has become an integral part of the strategies of preventive health policies at WHO, of population policies, of environmental world programmes, and of sustainable economic development plans in all UN bodies: FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNEP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, the World Bank, not to mention similar trends at the European Commission as well as the Organization of American States and the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the ACCT and other regional inter-governmental organizations, together with recognized NGOs in all regions and at the international level.

The Fifth Conference on Adult Education has to be situated in the context of ongoing long-term United Nations initiatives: the Jomtien Declaration on Education For All and the Framework of Action (1990), the UNESCO World Decade of Cultural Development (1988-1997), the UNDP World Development Decade (1991-2000), the Rio Conference on the Environment (1992), the Cairo International Conference on Population (1994), the Social Development Summit (1995), the Beijing International Conference on Women (1995), and the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century.

II. Objectives

General objective

The general objective of the Conference is to manifest the importance of adult learning and to forge worldwide commitments to adult and continuing education in the perspective of lifelong learning aimed at (a) facilitating the participation of all in sustainable and equitable development, (b) promoting a culture of peace based on freedom, justice and mutual respect, (c) empowering women and men, and (d) building a synergy between formal and nonformal education.

In this context, UNESCO and its partners will make an effort to ensure equal input and representation of all regions of the world and of all actors involved in the whole domain of adult learning.

Specific objectives

First, to review the rapid and diversified development of education for out-of-school youth and adults and of continuing education since 1985, in order to identify the achievements and obstacles as well as the changing patterns.

Second, to identify the contribution that adult and continuing education could make to help women and men face the major world challenges and to empower themselves.

Third, to exchange experiences on how to enhance the quality, conditions and accessibility of adult and continuing education programmes.

Fourth, to recommend future policies and priorities for adult and continuing education within the context of lifelong learning.

Fifth, to examine the contribution and impact of new information technologies.

Sixth, to explore and suggest the most effective forms of local, national, regional and international cooperation.

Seventh, to provide, overall, an open forum for reflection and discussion that mirrors the culture of adult learning which the Conference wishes to promote.

III. *Leitmotiv* of the Conference

The *Leitmotiv* of the Conference is **»Adult learning: a key for the twenty-first century«**. It is proposed to develop this central theme from complementary viewpoints: being a key and a tool, adult learning is both a right, a joy and a shared responsibility.

Adult learning is a tool for personal as well as for social, economic and cultural development. It is also a right which has obtained universal legitimacy. But participation and learning are also a manifestation of quality of life, a social experience and a shared responsibility.

IV. Themes

The proposed themes to be suggested to the regional meetings and discussed at the 1997 Conference reflect the different dimensions of the rapidly evolving domain of adult learning. They refer to the new contexts, to the explosion of learning demand among adult populations and to the shifting policy patterns and the changing practices in adult and continuing education.

First theme: **Adult learning and the challenges of the twenty-first century**

- the societal issues and global risks facing today's societies call upon the participation and the creativity and competence of all citizens. A learning society is a condition of an active civil society.
- adult learning for democracy and human rights · culture of peace · active citizenship · role of NGOs · poverty alleviation · adult learning and gender relationships · promotion of non-discriminatory societies · national and minority identities.

Second theme: **Improving the conditions and quality of adult learning**

- content and curriculum · open learning systems · access to secondary and postsecondary education · planning and coordination mechanisms · training of personnel · research, documentation and statistics · accreditation of prior and experiential learning · information services.

Third theme: **Ensuring the universal right to literacy and basic education**

- social imperatives of adult literacy · nonformal education for out-of-school youth · rising requirements of literacy and numeracy skills · expanding needs, both in developing and industrial areas, for broader basic education · multilingualism and mother-tongue literacy · literacy environments · oral andliterate traditions · relations between formal and nonformal basic education · relations between initial and adult education.

Fourth theme: **Promoting the empowerment of women through adult learning**

- removing obstacles to participation · action against gender discrimination · specific programmes for women and affirmative approaches · role of social and women's movements · transformation of self and of society.

Fifth Theme: **Adult learning and the changing world of work**

- adult learning in relation to economic development · adult learning and agricultural productivity · adult learning and occupational mobility · upgrading of skills and technological changes · dualization of labour markets · overlapping of technical and general content · income generation programmes.

Sixth Theme: **Adult learning in the context of preventive security: environment, health and population**

- adult learning and environment: prevention of ecological risks adult learning and health · adult learning and population.

Seventh theme: **Adult learning, media and culture**

- impact of new information technologies · democratization of the media · contribution of museums, libraries and other information learning facilities · learning environments.

Eighth theme: **Adult learning and groups with special needs**

- aging population · migrants · nomadic populations · persons with disabilities · prisoners.

Ninth theme: **The economics of adult learning**

- financing of adult education · reviewed cost-benefit analyses · changing of financial patterns and mechanisms · impact of structural adjustment programmes · financial role of multilateral organizations.

Tenth theme: **Enhancing international co-operation and solidarity**

- adult learning in the framework of new global educational and socio-economic policies · critical analysis of policies of international organizations related to adult learning · cooperation in research and development · cooperation and solidarity.

Each of these themes will be addressed also in the context of five transversal issues: equality of opportunity, respect for cultural identities, gender sensitivity, relevance of learning strategies and environments, and promotion of cooperation and partnership.

V. Expected outcomes

- To document development and changes.
- To discuss and propose future policies and priorities.
- To create new exchange networks.
- To build commitment.
- To propose initiatives for cooperation and follow-up.
- To adopt a **Declaration on Adult Learning.**
- To design an **Agenda for the Future** which will be prepared at national and regional levels.

VI. The proposed concept of the Conference

It is proposed that the character of this UNESCO Conference be **intergovernmental with adaptations** (Category II) in order to allow the full participation of all actors: NGOs, industry, universities. It will be a **UNESCO-led Conference with other cooperating partners** to be invited: ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNEP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, OECD, the Council of Europe, and the World Bank, as well as regional governmental entities (e.g. the European

Commission, the Organization of American States, the Organization of African Unity etc.).

The official languages at the opening and closing sessions will be: six UN languages (E, Fr, Sp, R, Ar, Ch)*; for the two commissions and the thematic groups: two languages: (English and one of the other UN languages) and for the round tables: one language (more, if self-financed).

VII. Preparatory activities

Questionnaires will be sent by UNESCO to the Member States, recognized NGOs and multilateral organizations.

A **consultative committee** to examine the proposed Declaration and the draft of the Agenda for the Future will be created. It will include multilateral agencies and inter-governmental institutions associated as »cooperating partners«, official representatives of directly related NGOs associated to UNESCO, and the coordinators of each of the thematic groups. The committee will meet once in December 1996 and immediately before the Conference.

Six regional preparatory meetings will take place at the end of 1996: in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, in Latin America, in the Caribbean, in the Arab States and in Europe. Each meeting will lead to a regional report to be presented at the first day of the Conference.

The different **thematic groups** will be formed in 1996 in cooperation with multi-lateral and/or nongovernmental organizations.

The Fifth International Conference will be organized by UNESCO as the leading agency. Within UNESCO, the UNESCO Institute for Education has been asked to »play a leadership role in the preparation and organization«, in collaboration with Headquarters in Paris.

* It is anticipated that German will also be adopted owing to the location of the conference.

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ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

POLICY
REFLECTIONS
TRENDS

20

The demand for continuing education is growing worldwide in all fields and among all sections of the population. Lifelong learning has become a societal issue and is currently undergoing a transformation. Paul Bélanger describes six trends which characterize this process.

Dr Paul Bélanger is the Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education, Feldbrunnenstrasse 58, 20148 Hamburg, Germany.

Paul Bélanger

Trends in adult education policy

Marta, 35 years old, after her prolonged maternity leave, decides to go back to paid work but faces obstacles and needs to do something.

Working in the car industry, Klaus joins every year in on-the-job training sessions in order to upgrade his technical skills, following the introduction of new technologies and changes in the mode of production.

Fatima, a Moroccan mother of four young children, would like, in common with other women in her village, to reorganize her life.

Agatha, 68 years old, retired but full of energy, can no longer stand her life, either looking out of her windows at people going by or sitting in front of her TV set for hours at a time.

Ignatius, 25, is stuck in jail for ten years.

A committee of citizens in São Paulo needs to get evidence on the pollution produced by a local incinerator and seeks technical coaching from the regional university in order to monitor the situation.

For all these people, the millions of people like Klaus, Agatha, Marta and Ignatius, adult learning policies can make a difference in their lives, helping them to improve their capacity to act, giving them more opportunity to question, to create and to improve. Adult learning is undergoing complete reconstruction. I will suggest six trends characterizing this ongoing transformation.

Adult learning: a societal issue

The first and most significant trend is that adult learning has become a societal issue. The demand among the adult population for opportunities to learn has grown to a critical level. In fact, adult learning is now becoming a societal issue as significant as health, the environment and peace. A silent revolution in education is now in the making. Slowly, over the last 20 years, changes have occurred and accumulated, in the community, in private life and at work: a steady increase in the level of initial education among the adult population, a slow but continuous and profound redefinition of the role of women in private life, an increase in the proportion of women in the active population, a silent but constant expansion in the use of written communication in daily life, at the work place and in the community, a non-stop reduction in working time, a ceaseless introduction of new technology at the work place and in the community, an exponential growth in information production and in the information technology to make it accessible, a continual lengthening of the period people spend in retirement, and consequently a steady increase in the proportion of the aged in the overall population. Through this series of small but cumulative changes over recent decades, individual aspirations and socioeconomic needs for more adult learning provision have grown at an increasing rate, so that there has been a sudden substantial transformation of the educational scene. Many refer to an explosion in the demand for adult learning.

We are reaching a turning point in the history of education, when government, the civil society and industry will be compelled to face up to and respond to this new issue. One of the most significant trends in adult and continuing education is in fact this accelerating expansion of demand in all areas.

The question is no longer whether adult learning is needed, and how important it is. The issue today is how to respond to this increasing and diversified demand, how to manage this explosion. In all countries, from India to France, from Australia to South Africa, from the European Athens summit in June 1994 to the white paper on competitiveness in the European region, and in all similar policy papers that have been published over the last five years in most industrialized countries, the same statements can be found: if we are to survive, to develop and to compete, the most critical resource is the talent and energy of people. We must now make the most of it. This new approach is the expression of a demand for the empowerment of adults, for training in industry, for retraining of the labor force, for education in a second and third language, for environmental education, for migrant education, for alleviation of poverty through functional nonformal basic education, and so on. Adult learning is no longer a marginal pastime fighting for recognition: it has become a visible societal issue, noticeable in the media, present in national election campaigns, evident at work, visible in civil society.

The contradiction between learning demand and present provision

The second issue is that policies related to adult learning are changing in all countries. While people have growing aspirations to pursue learning projects throughout their lives and to continually empower themselves by improving their capacity to act and their creative capacity, the present general provision of adult learning opportunities is a long way from meeting the demands of the various social groups. The educational responses available to adults are unevenly developed. Many divides are now emerging between the genders, between those who work in the primary and secondary labor markets, between those who work in large and small enterprises, between the young and the older active population, between men and women in vocational education, between those living in urban and rural areas, etc. These inequalities are rooted in inequalities in initial education which influence later participation in adult education activities — inequalities also in access to adult education throughout life. Of course this trend is not absolute; there are innovative remedial programs in many countries, such as the outreach strategies in Scandinavia and the literacy programs in Ecuador and Namibia, but these corrective schemes have so far remained marginal.

The globalization of adult learning policies

The third trend in adult education policy is the internationalization of such policies. The forces that prompt and catalyze learning demand among the adult population cut across national boundaries; they are of an international nature. They are leading in turn to the globalization of the economy, of course, and the transformation of work places, but societies now also face ecological dangers, epidemics that threaten public health, the population explosion, and the intensification of domestic national and regional conflicts. And because of the global nature of these issues, multilateral agencies tend to intervene more and more, adopting and promoting major policies in order to alter the present provision of literacy and of adult and continuing education. This trend can be observed in Europe within the European Commission, in the structural adjustment programs in developing countries, in the NAFTA corrective measures in North America, in the policies for human resource development of multinational companies, etc.

The »return of the actors«

A fourth dimension of the changing policy environment of adult learning is what I would like to call the »return of the actors«. This trend refers of course to the swing back from policies focusing on capital, with their train of rationalization and flexibility measures that limit the search for increased productivity to reductions in staffing levels, toward policies centered on labor, on participation and human development. However, I want to place the emphasis on the rediscovery of the individual, of individual citizens, and of the roles of social agencies in the production of new policies. No policy-making process in any area, including education and training, can be restricted to a top-down approach; it has to allow for the dynamics of interventions and negotiations by social forces. The European policy on lifelong and adult learning that is evolving is in fact the result of such dynamics, which have taken the form of summit discussions, dialogue between the social partners, regional initiatives, etc. The same is true of the changes that the World Bank is now considering in structural adjustment programs as a reaction to all the resistance that has been put up against reductions in basic health and education services. As adult learning becomes a crucial factor in the gradual improvement of working conditions, and of private and public life, the more it is influenced by new forces, new struggles, new negotiations and public opinion campaigns.

There is a striking parallel between the issue of gender in today's society and the adult learning question. In both cases a major shift can be seen, from demands limited to equal access toward calls for both equal rights and recognition of identities, and from claims for accessibility toward collective action to establish more meaningful provision. In education, this means, for example, that quality is no longer defined in terms of »standardized standards«, but of schemes which, although they aim in the direction of some core goals, allow participants to learn while respecting and strengthening their own identities, and enabling them to confront »others«. Following the leadership of women's groups, more and more adults are asking not only for access to education but also for a part in defining the programs to which they want access, and wish to learn about the world outside through their own cultures.

There is a second interesting parallel. It has to do with the democracy of intimacy, to use a beautiful expression coined by the British sociologist, Antony Giddens. There is indeed a striking similarity between, on the one hand, women's struggle for the legitimacy of the rights of the individual over her own body and, on the other hand, the growing desire of many adults to be able to decide on the development of their own minds and brains. In both cases, it is a refusal to let the intimate part of one's life be completely governed by decisions outside the control of the individual subject. Learning is too intimate. Learning is too close to individual motivations, to existential anxiety, to major personal transitions throughout life, to the affective dimension of one's life, to the inner passions and dreams which one tries to pursue. More and more adults will need to have a say in the development of this growing dimension of their intimacy, in the construction of their selves.

The recently recognized importance of learning environments

The fifth trend is the recognition of the importance of learning environments. People's educational life histories are influenced not only by the provision of adult learning opportunities, but also by the quality of the environments where they live, work and learn. We speak increasingly today of the ecology of learning, of the ecology of cognitive life. The different environments in which adults live and work influence their participation in education, foster or hinder motivation, reinforce or vitiate learning experiences. It is against that background that the OECD is promoting the concept of »learning cities« and that other organizations are putting forward the idea of learning enterprises.

Adults live and work in a range of contexts, which vary in the extent to which they stimulate and are conducive to creative learning. Adult education activities themselves are conducted in institutional and cultural settings, and use approaches, that may well put people off and destroy their motivation to learn. Adult learning is more than adult education provision. It cannot be separated from the various learning environments and ambiences which may or may not provide opportunities to explore, to express oneself freely, and to participate in identifying, analyzing and solving problems. The way in which work is organized, or in which life is lived in general, can very well negate people's intelligence and their desire to know. The community has a profound impact on the mental health of people and more generally on their aspirations to learn, their curiosity and their desire to develop their own competence. Different environments, and different reactions to those environments, produce different learning conditions. From such a perspective, adult eduto all the resistance that has been put up against reductions in basic health and education services. As adult learning becomes a crucial factor in the gradual improvement of working conditions, and of private and public life, the more it is influenced by new forces, new struggles, new negotiations and public opinion campaigns.

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International solidarity

A sixth dimension is the solidarity between developed and developing countries in the adult learning scene. This particularly concerns the adult education associations. In Europe, for example, the policy of the European Commission on adult learning cannot be confined to programs for European citizens, but also includes the policies and roles of the various international programs of the EU in the other world regions. If it is not to be an accomplice in the growing inequality between the two shores of the Mediterranean, the European adult education movement will not be able to remain silent in the present debate over EU cooperation policy. Major members of the European Union are proposing to freeze or reduce their contributions to the funds Europe makes available to developing countries. The level of the contributions of industrialized countries to developing countries, below 0.3%, is at its lowest for 20 years. The target set many years ago, of 0.7 rising to 1%, has been achieved only in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Some adult education associations are becoming involved in the new »6%« Movement. This is good news. Adult learning is also global learning.

There are many other policy trends that could have been mentioned: the crisis of work, the changing role of the state, the impact of privatization, etc. But I would like to conclude by observing, in common with many others, and this is probably the most important trend today, that there are no longer single trends, but always a multiplicity of trends, alternative patterns. Nothing is fixed. We are now witnessing a diversification of possible directions, and are seeing discussions and negotiations on the different ways in which provision can be arranged, learning environments developed and obstacles removed. The language used in the adult education scene is less and less that of fixed objectives, but rather a language of possibilities. What has been taking place in all regions for the last few years is very good news for all the people we mentioned at the beginning, for all the Marta's, the Klaus's and the Fatima's, for all of us who do not want to stop developing, to stop living, to die educationally or to stop empowering ourselves and improving our capacity to act, as well as for the elected representatives who want to bring about equitable development and for those involved in policy making in adult and continuing education. *»Les jeux ne sont pas faits.«* It is good news for all the individuals who are increasingly expressing their demands openly. The drama of lifelong learning policy is still developing; the climax is yet to come. Already it is fun: the joy of learning.

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It is available in English, Spanish and French.

The adult education business — in the sense of »lifelong learning« — is booming, both in the leisure and the vocational sectors. Karlheinz A. Geißler reflects on the causes of this development and raises the question of the quality of adult education which is torn between economics and education and is dependent on market principles.

Dr. Karlheinz A. Geißler is Professor of Educational Economics and Social Work at the University of the Bundeswehr, Munich, 85577 Neubiberg, Germany, and teaches in adult education.

Karlheinz A. Geißler

Adult education in modern times — development and quality

One hundred and twenty years ago, Flaubert wrote in his unfinished novel »Bouvard et Pécuchet«: But soon they became bored, their minds longed for work, their lives for a goal... And they came upon the idea of giving a course for adults.« This sounds so modern that one might think it came from a contemporary literary work, but it is over 100 years old. The second quotation is even older:

»Germany may only be proud of the education of its people in statistical terms, while the people themselves bring home a distaste for school.« In these words, Leo Tolstoy described the German educational scene in 1861 in his »Thoughts on popular education«, after a journey through Germany. There was then no question of continuing education. But — if one were to replace »school« by »continuing education« —would this be a fitting description of present-day reality? Of course not. Dislike of continuing education is kept within bounds. Indeed, the opposite is the case: people attend educational provision voluntarily and frequently. However, if one looks more closely than is possible on a brief journey — such as that made by Tolstoy — one sees that this is not the whole picture. There are a large number of people who never attend continuing education courses; some attend unwillingly; and many would not describe their decision to attend a community adult education centre class, a company training session or a trade union educational course, as made of their own free will. But such a question is too fundamental: who has complete freedom in this world — and who has freedom within adult education provision?

Many things are uncertain, assuming that they ever were certain, and many have become more contradictory and paradoxical. There is a lack of certainty, and this is precisely what has ensured adult education its success, and continues to do so. Ambiguities are the hallmark of adult education in modern times.

They are so from the outset. The enlightening aim of adult education was and is autonomy, its medium independence. Its basic programme promises »independence for autonomy«. In the advanced modernity of our times, this paradoxical programme is called »lifelong learning«. To be an adult means remaining a pupil for one's entire life. One never grows out of some aspects of learning; one has instead to pursue them throughout life. »Use the opportunities you don't have« is the »Catch 22« of such a modern culture of learning. And if anyone tries to hold out against this one-sided assumption by refusing to take part in education, he or she is regarded as fair game for educational guidance and support. Grants are available to push the last few abstainers from education into the clutches of the learning society. There are no non-participants any more, only not-yet-participants. This means that everyone is obliged to attend educational provision. In other words, if one wants to be thought normal, one has to pursue ever more education. »Anyone who isn't being educated, in the common sense of the term, must either keep quiet, find excuses, or admit to being disadvantaged.«[1]

Everyone has to and wants to learn more and more nowadays — and those who do not do so are forced into line, if only by discovering the consequences of their non-learning. There is plenty of evidence: it is impossible to visit the dentist without being subjected to an obligatory programme of instruction about teeth-cleaning. The health insurance schemes see to that. And so I come to my first section, entitled:

Life is a never-ending workshop

It goes without saying nowadays that adult education is a basic requirement of the population. It is part and parcel of normality, and the notions running through this functionally differentiated capitalist normality are »always and everywhere« and »more of the same«. I shall give you some data.

In 1989, out of all the 18-year olds in the Federal Republic, 84 per cent were in some form of education or training, compared to 27 per cent in 1960, while among 21-year olds over the same period participation rose from 7.6 to 30 per cent, and among 25-year olds from 3 to 17 per cent. In 1991, 37 per cent of German adults (aged 19 to 63 years) took part in continuing education. In 1979, the figure was considerably lower, only 23 per cent. In 1992, over 6.2 million adults participated in some 300,000 courses at over 1,000 community adult education centres. These had a total budget of DM 1,400 million, a third of which was raised from student fees. Some 10 million adults took part in vocational continuing education in Germany in 1992. Company investment in vocational continuing education in 1992 amounted to DM 36,000 million.

That is enough figures to show clearly that adults are seen today as »everlasting modelling clay«[2]. Even though the methods of calculating figures may be open to wide-ranging criticism, there is a definite, clear trend. It supports the proposition that adult education has become the norm at the end of this century. But a description of this situation, doubtless a satisfactory situation from the point of view of career opportunities for adult educators, does not explain why and how such a development should have occurred. I shall begin with some observations.

Modern adult education has not arisen from the ideas of one social group or from the ideal of a cultured, learning society. It is, and to many ears with educational ideals this sounds rather shocking, an expression and means of social production and reproduction, and in particular those of the industrial society, with all its contradictions.

The modernized world is an accelerated world, a complex and individualized world, symbolized by continual, unavoidable circulation. Talcott Parsons has attempted to describe the dynamics of modern society, with its phenomena of increasing educationalization. The growing speed of change in economic and social living conditions — particularly changes in patterns of work — are devaluing traditional cultural patterns of living ever more quickly and radically. Everyone has a constantly increasing »need to act« at a faster and faster pace. Speed, lack of transparency, and unceasing growth are the most obvious features of this process.

This is a brief description of the dynamics of modernization, which have now taken on the form of capitalist industrialization worldwide. The effects are obvious. As a result of the consequent penetration of capitalist economic principles in Europe, the trend towards individualistic life styles has grown markedly in the last 25 years, bringing with it an aggravated loss of direction and purpose, with an attendant individual and societal search for substitutes. We no longer live in a world with a common structure. Modernity undermines traditional structures. The new is the fetish of exaggerated modernity. The definition of progress is in fact whatever is new; it is open-ended, and there is no goal that can ever be reached. It is its own goal. As a result, we no longer know where we want to go, but we make all the greater efforts to get there. People no longer have **one** world, but many possible worlds.

This collapse of a world conceived and built on unity leads to people's socialization taking place in an extremely individualistic manner: »If there is no God,« says Berger, paraphrasing Dostoevsky, »every I is possible.«[3] Novalis' »Christianity or Europe« contains a more critical version: »If there are no more gods, then we are ruled by ghosts« — which, I suggest, we try to drive out with the help of adult education.

Individualization in people's lives means that these become reflections of the self. »Societally determined life styles become transformed into lives which are and have to be created by the individual, so that each person shapes his or her own life« and hence »serves up the same soup that he or she has cooked.«[4] »The result is that people are drawn further and further into the labyrinth of uncertainty, self-doubt and self-reassurance.«[5] »Maybe, maybe not« is the title of a novel by d'Annunzio which sums up this development.

Young people, who are sent out into life with a dwindling sackful of values determined by family and class socialization, face a situation in which they have to keep filling up their sack. This leads adult education to take »lifelong learning« as its motto. The duty to be free (with the pressure to realize oneself) is the duty to go on learning. The risk-based society is thus the seedbed of adult education. The hole in the ozone layer provides the stimulus for courses to which people turn for advice, mad cow disease pushes up the numbers attending vegetarian cooking courses, and back ache creates a need for posture classes.

Individualization is also a reflection of the fact that a sense of purpose is less and less provided by the environment, by social groupings and the powers that govern society. It has constantly to be worked out by the individual. Life (work) has become an individual project, with enhanced opportunities to act. Freedom from traditional constraints, collective norms and authoritatively prescribed social relationships, which has undoubtedly grown, is accompanied by alienation from social contexts. The literary model for this social type is the »Man with no features«, of whom Musil says: »But such a man is not by any means free of ambiguities.« He is the man for all possibilities, »he thinks that nothing is permanent.«[6]

This all results in a great need for the giving of a sense of direction, for clarification, discussion and elaboration of newer and newer perspectives. Adult education is the beneficiary. It becomes the provider of a sense of purpose in place of traditions and grand ideas, whose grandeur has largely worn away.

There is a demand for adult education in the modernization process, so that people can escape the worst of their own uncertainties in an uncertain world. Major uncertainties are thereby changed into minor ones. In an environment which is becoming ever more complex and varied, this is more and more necessary.

Adult education is needed more and more to help to maintain a shifting balance of order and chaos between immediate social environments. It offers protection from the »loneliness of man in the wilderness of insularities«[7]. And at the same time — here again paradoxically — it produces imbalances, increased complexity and greater individualization, on the consequences of which it feeds.

Modernity, with its complexity and plurality, cannot be understood unless the means to do so are developed. Adult education provides one such means of understanding, and it is also a means of release from what has traditionally been self-evident. Adult education is thus both a victim and a perpetrator of the modernization process. This is a dynamically stable position, or in other words, it is modern. In the next section, by looking at the three main areas of demand, we shall examine how modernity actually takes shape in adult education. It is entitled:

Progress marches on...

On individual demand

Individuals increasingly try to cope with planning and managing their lives, which has become more difficult, and/or with balancing them, through adult education. If the statements of students in community adult education centre classes were concentrated into one imaginary student, then in answer to the question »Why do you go to a community adult education centre?« one would have the following answer:

»I go whenever I'm feeling good; but then again, when I'm not feeling too good. I often go if I'm alone; but I particularly like going with my girl friend. If I want to do something towards promotion at work I attend community adult education courses, but I often go too when I want to switch off from the stress of working and need entertainment and diversion. Otherwise I keep clear of the centre, unless I don't know where to go — and that often happens.«

That is probably an exaggeration. But it is an accurate reflection of reality, and reality, particularly the reality of modernity, is not infrequently exaggerated. Provision responds to the variation in motives. Variety is the hallmark of community adult education centres and other educational institutions. Courses in Aristotelian philosophy take place not only alongside tango courses, but sometimes right underneath them. This provides an audible solution to the difficulty of creating a link between two so very different classes. In the summer term people attend courses on »Starting to be yourself at last« in order to find a purpose in their lives, and then in the winter term they attend courses such as »Stop being yourself at last«. Somehow or other, anything is possible, and anything makes sense. What is unequal is treated equally, and variety is the criterion. The unity of adult education consists rather in comparing disparate things.

... and isn't that what it's supposed to do?

This fragmentation of content is matched by fragmentation of time. Learning and working times are no longer typically divided by age — this is seen in the attempt to entice people into what is called »lifelong education« — but their daily, weekly and yearly pattern has become diffuse. Deregulated working conditions are on the increase, with the result that only a quarter of working people have so-called »normal working conditions«. Variable hours, part-time working, 4-day weeks and shift work are all expanding and introducing flexibility into the way people lead their lives. Individuals have greater opportunities to manage their time. Once again, adult education benefits from this, twice over in fact: there is more time available outside the work done for others, for educational activities for example, while people also need education and counselling in order to take advantage of the growing opportunities for self-management and to translate this into the varied potential options. The growth in leisure time is once more a paradoxical process, however. Leisure time is **not** free — and this is good for adult education. What we call »free time« is usually the time that we do not spend in regular employment. Even in our free time we are working, but not in the form known to the police as »pursuing regular employment«. Free time can thus be split into (often unpaid) work during free time, and time that is freely available. Such freely available time is very unequally distributed, by occupational status, family circumstances, sex and income. The statements which we constantly hear and read that free time has vastly increased and is a problem because »people don't know what to do with it« are false and polemical. This is so because they ignore work outside paid employment. It is that very **private everyday work** which has grown dramatically: the Federal Office of Statistics gives a figure of 2 hours 48 minutes per day for those in full-time paid employment. The spread of technology, for example, has imposed its own increased demands and skill requirements — not only in the field of regular employment but also in so-called »leisure time activities«. The same is true of the growing complexity of many areas (the spread of the »knowledge base«). We now speak of consumer work. Since the requirement to do things democratically has grown in recent years, we now have to work more on relationships — and this reduces the amount of time freely available. In order to satisfy the increased demand for health and to guarantee greater life expectancy, we work on our health. We are kept up to it by doctors and friends, and by the not entirely disinterested authors of messages on food packaging. The education of our children (if we can still afford them) is tied up with intensive and extensive unpaid educational **work**. Demands are growing here too, so that more time has to be given to it. The shift from services provided by commercial enterprises and public authorities to private households also eats into free time. We have to submit our dealings with the bank in computer-readable form, we collect our meals ourselves from the counter, deliver articles in computerized form on diskette, buy our furniture a long way away and then assemble it ourselves, and we have ourselves to sort the refuse, which we create in excessive quantities, and more and more often to cart it away too. Everyday life has become a tyranny of petty decisions, including those relating to adult education provision.

This trend finds its psychological expression in leisure-time stress. The community adult education centres and other providers of education profit from the tendency to fill leisure time with unpaid work (in many forms). The strength of these educational institutions, and their image, is that they are attended enthusiastically by people looking for ideas, skills, solutions, diversions and assistance in the context of private everyday work. People take a course when they first buy a video camera. Next comes planning for a family, if that has not already begun — for nowadays we have to learn how to give our children a healthy diet. We must go on doing so, because the information base is constantly changing. We need a course to take the right decisions about our children's education when they are older, and mothers (so far unfortunately, only mothers) face the problem of returning to paid employment, which can be alleviated by learning. At the same period of their lives, fathers, on the other hand, are busy working on their flats and houses and even on their careers. And this is only possible with the huge support of learning processes, lest one starts to feel that one is not getting the best out of one's life, or what one calls one's life. And if one does get this feeling, then there is always a course with the promising title of »You too can learn self-confidence«.

It is no longer even possible to flee so much educational provision and to go on holiday in Italy without taking an Italian course. Finally, if none of the other courses on offer seems attractive, there is still a course on how to die. It can only be hoped — and this is a typically modern form of anxiety — that one attends it in time.

All this has already become normal reality. There is evidence to argue that individuals shape their lives to an increasing degree by means of learning processes, and counterbalance the problems in their lives by attending educational courses. It is a life in which people are »dragged forwards« without being able to become »masters« of the process. They can no longer »take hold of« their lives, which means that they have to learn to live their lives as best they can without »having a hold« on them; that is what they want and expect from education. The Statistical Yearbook of the Federal Republic of Germany (1994) provides impressive evidence: in 1992, the number of community adult education centres rose by 27, the number of courses by 17,000 and that of students by 146,000. Community adult education centres are fast becoming the pedestrianized zones of the educated citizen. The outlook is good, even in places of employment.

The demand for company training

Updating of skills, promotion, integration and even gratification are the intentions with which companies set about education and training and hope to solve their problems. Staff development with the aid of education and training is the trend, which is clearly aimed at gaining extra value from staff by skimming off their potential. Company demand for training has therefore risen immensely. This situation has been recognized economically in the respected American economic journal »Fortune«, which recently made the educational level of the population of a country the most significant economic factor in international competition. Some fundamental observations are in order.

If technological and organizational changes are taking place within companies at an ever increasing rate, and if, as is stated by credible sources, we are still in the early stages of this accelerating process, then the skills learnt will become obsolete increasingly rapidly. That means that they will not long be adequate to meet the requirements of the work process at any given work station. Today's skills will have to be replaced and enhanced by new, additional skills tomorrow. According to this logic, vocational continuing education will become investment in the future — doubtless less investment in the future of the individual employees than in that of the company. What is seen here will be reinforced in the next few decades: continuing education and training will increasingly become a component part of company planning and personnel services. This also means that (particularly vocational) continuing education will increasingly be designed and run according to economic principles, the cost-benefit ratio being calculated.

This can already be seen at university level in the striking fact that faculties and departments of industrial economics more and more frequently declare continuing education and training to be their remit. Educationists are thrown on to the defensive, although sensible lessons for continuing training could be learnt from their tradition. At the political level, we observe a similar development: continuing education policy is increasingly dominated by economic policy.

Three main areas of need can be identified in the context of work in occupational employment.

Continuing education to keep up with technological and organizational developments: The speeding up of change in our society can definitely be traced to the accelerating pace of technological change. A classic example is the innovations in electronic data processing which are occurring at ever shorter intervals. Keeping up with technological development and the organizational changes which follow in the wake of this development requires new and updated skills at an increasing rate. This is the main thrust of what is usually called »updating training«. Most vocational continuing training now consists, and will in future continue to consist, of learning to use, control and maintain new technological systems. (This includes English courses, which have become necessary to understand the instructions for technological equipment.)

Continuing education to rationalize social processes: It is not only mechanical and technological processes that should be rational in companies, according to economic reckoning, but also social contacts. Disturbances should be as much eliminated as possible, decisions as effective as possible, meetings and conferences as free of conflict and productive as possible, and contacts with customers as successful as possible. Social techniques, specific patterns of behaviour and attitudes which will favour economic success are expected to bring all this about. The rationalization of this so-called »field of interaction« will, according to identifiable trends, lead to a very large demand in the continuing education sector. It is particularly the so-called training field which has seen steadily rising demand for some years. This includes training in sales, customer counselling and conflict management, and in conference, meeting, moderation, teaching and presentation techniques.

Continuing education as counselling for non-standard situations: The reality of everyday working life cannot be learnt just by detailed skills-based preparation to operate technological systems, or by thorough training in the social field. Things often turn out quite differently from what one thought, hoped and imagined. Everyday life is not an exact copy of what continuing education has prepared one for. Fortunately, our life is not standardized (although the techniques of rationalization often try to make it so). The more we try to standardize, the more we notice those situations and processes which are not susceptible to standardization. We cannot rule out surprises. Situations that elude standardization have something to do with the uniqueness (subjectivity) of the people involved in them and dealing with them. Counselling does make

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sense to stabilize people (subjects) in such situations and environments and to enable them to take decisions, and to check on the decisions taken. Already there is growing demand for such counselling, particularly among managers. There are different forms of counselling: individual counselling, group counselling, organizational counselling, team counselling and coaching. While this may presently be a small field of continuing education in comparison to the other two fields, I believe that it will see the greatest expansion in the future.

Continuing education brings order and convergence to the tensions and disagreements of in-company relationships. It is becoming increasingly important for the reproduction and legitimation of social inequality, not only in companies, but also in the whole of society. Promotion at work is legitimated almost exclusively through education and training, although it is not always carried out. That means that anyone who gains promotion in a company today is almost invariably sent on a training course first, so that the other members of the company think that he (less often, she) has learnt something new. The selection of a particular person for promotion can only be justified in this way. In this context, the principle of »Darwinism of vocational qualifications« is entirely accurate. Particularly in companies, but not only there, adult education provides a means of distancing people from one another.

Demand for education from the state

The state has become a major customer for education. In the mid-1970s it discovered that it could achieve its fiscal policy ends through education. It can individualize social problems, by defining unemployment as an educational issue, and it can reduce the potential for conflict among the population. For example, as soon as right-wing extremism appears, there is money for political education. Or when, as in the former Soviet Union, a reactor blows up, there is money for health education. German unification can be interpreted as the largest educational project in modern times. Billions have been spent on education and training.

The state acts as a customer for education, and increasingly as a customer acting in the interest of its own survival. It tries through education to minimize conflicts which flare up and appear dangerous to it. And this is done in ever more frantic haste. The accelerating pace and lack of transparency already mentioned are particularly noticeable in the actions of the state. Policy is increasingly made up of short-term try-outs. The aim of educational efforts is not to create a politically self-confident populace, but to let the state or the parties survive and retain power in the short term. The state plays a part in the market by pursuing its own interest in retaining power through education and training. But it does not behave as though this were the case. It demands a larger market for adult education, though it does not define itself publicly as a market participant but as an institution that rises above the market. This attitude of elevation is a stratagem which works. Firstly, there is no need to declare one's own interests, and one can define oneself as »rising above partiality« — which in turn serves one's own interests. And secondly, the providers of continuing education are forced to become suppliants, a role which they accept increasingly willingly, as is evident from what happens in practice.

What future for adult education?

One thing is certain: the need for education, and its provision, will go on growing. We now live in a society that is changing at an increasing rate. History offers two basic models for social change: revolution and war are one, and learning the other. The »revolution« model, particularly after the débâcle in Eastern Europe, is seen as a failure. The »change through learning« model is what succeeds, and it is that which is now the aim of nearly all societies. One of the main reasons for their choice is that they have learnt from their experiences of revolution and war. To that extent, the choice of the »learning« model is the result of a learning process, and often a very painful one. The slogan today is therefore »Make plans not war«. That is at last real progress.

There is less to celebrate in the probable future shape and content of adult education. The societal take-over of education is making further advances, and that means societal control is becoming increasingly apparent in adult education. To sum up, adult education is becoming even more a constituent part of the capitalist process of exploitation than it used to be.

Education is subordinated to economic considerations of preferably short-term profitability, by both companies and the state. Education is becoming investment in human capital and is thus under increasing pressure to amortize itself. This trend can even be seen among individuals, when the aim is to gain personal working skills or to realize occupational ambitions. As »entrepreneurs of their own labour«, people are subject to very similar considerations of short-term profit as those to whom they sell their labour. This causes a decisive increase in the pressure for efficiency in the field of vocational education and training. Anyone who wants to be efficient makes the same demand of others, so that they enable him or her to be so. The dictum that time is money applies here, although education has traditionally been more concerned with spending time than saving it.

What sort of quality — if any?

Throughout my incomplete review of what might be called »the systems development of adult education in the face of limitless modernity«, constant reference has been made to one type of change: this is the increasing adaptation of adult education to the market. This trend applies generally to adult education, but particularly to vocational adult education, which usually sails under the terminological colours of »continuing education«. The unspoken message which underlies such differentiation is that of »successful versus unsuccessful« — with all the shades of grey that lie between these two extremes.

»Success« is a concept that derives from the economic spirit of a society based on competition. »The development of a forward-looking success mindset« is seen today as the main task of company managements, and increasingly also as that of non-profit making organizations. »Quality«, »enhancing quality« and »guaranteeing quality« are the phrases that are on everyone's lips, and they are an attempt to put what is seen as success in competition into words. The main consideration in the discussion of quality which has been forced on educational institutions is how to increase turnover.

The »quality landslide« was set off by the motor industry, the sector of the economy with the highest degree of international competitiveness. The pressure to impose norms of quality reached Europe from Japan via the United States and has increased markedly in Germany and throughout the European Union (EU). For some products, the meeting of prescribed norms has now become a prerequisite for permission to trade within the EU. The EU guidelines on the legal liability of producers (which have been German law since 1990), which place the burden of proof on producers to demonstrate that their work is free of faults, have caused a noticeable rise in the demand for certificates that provide such proof.

This development has now caught up with educational institutions, particularly those which provide vocational training. A number of questions are necessarily raised by this, questions that are hardly new in the discussion of education. Should one go with the trend or stay outside it? Is education surrendering to economics? Are these economic considerations not perhaps giving education a much-needed nudge in the direction of success?

Such questions cannot be answered without addressing the question of **economic thinking in adult education — incompatibility or productive symbiosis?** This issue can be approached from three angles:

- that of the adult education **institution**
- that of the **subject matter** that is taught
- that of the **logic** underlying work on one side and education on the other.

However the matter is looked at, there are contradictions. The question is not whether there are contradictions, but whether these contradictions are productive or unproductive. The proverbial difference between apples and pears applies to economics and education. It is as foolish to decide between apples and pears as between economics and education.

From the point of view of community adult education centres

If community adult education centres want to survive as organizations, they have to make **economic use of staff**. That means that they must create the optimum relationship between expenditure and output. This affects staff selection, planning of organizational time, any staff dismissals that have to be made, etc. From this point of view (however dreadful this may sound to educators), people are the human potential in productive efficiency (on the same level as other organizational potential such as technological equipment). Among other things, it is a matter of achieving optimum return, in order to raise the quality (through added value) of institutional factors. This economic approach can take different forms: technocratic economics or complex goal-oriented economics. Both are subject to the economic maxim that the logic of the production process should be applied to people.

The personnel policy of modern enterprises has shown that economic interests have a growing number of complex goals; and in fact increasing attempts are made to achieve a return (the relationship between expenditure and output) by exploiting human resources in ways that make use of education and psychology. In other words, personnel policy has recently become educationalized: »enterprise culture«, »key skills« and »staff involvement« are its code words. This observation is lent added force by the fact that organizations are demanding more and more counselling, which is an educational and psychological form of intervention within the commercial environment.

From the point of view of the subject matter taught

As is evident from what community adult education centres are offering, courses with an economic content are expanding, as are those relating to psychology and education. There is no zero sum game between these fields, in which one must win and the other lose. Further, — and this is also shown from an analysis of provision — fields are becoming increasingly intermingled. Within the field of economics, »soft« questions are being put, as are »hard« questions in psychology and education. The economics of personnel management is one of the standard topics of commercial courses, and management of time one of those of psychology and education. There is no longer a clear line between economics and education. Some of the reasons are that economic change can only be brought about and successfully handled by and through learning, and that learning, skills and education are increasingly becoming a field of economics.

From the point of view of the logic of work versus education

These two fields have different logics. The logic of education is that of the development of the individual. That of the economy is based on the production of goods and services. Admittedly, both these logics vary and are frequently in sharp contrast, but their contrasting nature is itself productive. The concept of skills shows this clearly. Industry and commerce are concerned with applying the outcomes of learning. What employers regard as useable skills is, from the point of view of the individual, the development of his or her own employability and competence. The acquisition of skills therefore involves some form of education — the nature of which will depend on how broad they are. Not all skills imply education, but if they are broad enough, education will also occur. This is where the task is to ensure that the contrast between educational and economic interests is productive, so that the acquisition of skills is educational, and that education leads to the acquisition of skills. This debate has no end, and unless there is a constant tension, the contrast between economics and education will reach an unproductive stalemate.

There is a central, irreconcilable contrast between learning and working: one has to learn for oneself; no one else can be asked to do it for one. One can also work oneself, but need not. Other people can be deputed to work for one. This is a fundamental distinction, and all discussion of the acquisition of skills has to take it into account.

There are two ways of looking at the debate about the acquisition of skills. On the one hand, it is a rationalization of what can be rationalized, and on the other it is an attempt to rationalize what cannot be rationalized.

For some time it has been observed that providers of public services such as social services, youth services, refuse collection and community adult education centres, are subjected with increasing urgency to the criteria of economic efficiency: »It can generally be said that both the public and private (state registered) providers of adult education have come under pressure. While they were able to operate in the 1960s and '70s — a time when continuing education laws were promulgated, when adult education was introduced into higher education establishments and major reforms of education policy were planned — in a political environment of general enthusiasm for state support for particular activities, this is no longer the case. The production-oriented view of public services now predominates, with invitations to submit tenders that can be market-tested and traded. The aim is to reduce the role of the state as far as possible, or to place it on a refinancing footing which stems from the sales of products.«[8]

The ideal of successful educational management has replaced the belief in educational enlightenment. The price has become more important, i.e., the exchange value of provision. The latter itself is increasingly secondary, as is the stated purpose of what is taught (enlightenment, political education, helping people to become proactive citizens). In this context, norms of quality are necessary in order to keep within civilized bounds the education market that has broken out in both senses. This is attempted through quality standards. It remains to be seen whether it will be possible to use the methods of the market to restrain the unfettered earnings-related dynamics of the market, in which there is no just reward, merely one that succeeds.

Educational institutions are no longer tied to ideals, such as that of justice, but they are driven instead by success, which means economic success. We are living in a society in which what is right is what succeeds, and what succeeds is accepted as right — television gives daily examples of this situation. And adult education cannot distance itself from the situation, however much it might want to.

In the debate on quality, there is therefore a dilemma. If one is in favour of quality, then one forces adult education to behave like a market, in which anything that cannot be sold is thrown out (and that is a large slice of provision). If one opposes quality, one removes oneself from the debate, thereby boycotting the attempt to civilize the existing and expanding market through that debate on quality.

Community adult education for everyone?

The times are changing, and have changed. In a review of »The Sociology of Popular Education« (ed. Leopold von Wiese), which appeared in the 1920s, Musil wrote: »If one imagines that anyone else is interested in adult education outside the circle of those involved, one is looked at as if one were a tailor who is inspired by God; the mind of the average German intellectual is set too high for such questions« (1968). This appears to be changing, perhaps because there is no longer any popular education, but the imposition of community adult education on society instead. Modernization induced by education is not damage caused by civilization but a reflection of modernized conditions. Adult education not only solves the problems that this process brings with it, but it also creates them by solving them and promising to solve them. Rather like our view of travel, learning is no longer a reflection of fate and unavoidable necessity. It is part of our perception of what we call »freedom«. The way to individualism via adult education has thus become the path trodden by most people. It is part of our contemporary freedom. If we have to be lonely, then let us be so together.

Notes

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ACTIONAID. Preparing the future. Women, literacy and development. The impact of female literacy on human development and the participation of literate women in change.

This report deliberately concentrated on the almost un-researched subject of the impact of adult women's literacy by studying the outcomes of 43 project case studies and one country case study (Nepal). The projects and reports are from ACTIONAID, ODA files on Joint Funding activities and a review of published work on the subject. This publication from ACTIONAID by Lalage Bown is ACTIONAID's fourth Development Report.

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Rosa María Torres, the Ecuadorian adult education expert and former director of the Ecuadorian literacy campaign, who currently resides in Argentina, served for many years as an educational advisor to UNICEF. In the following article, which is the text of a paper she presented at the IV International Conference »The University and Popular Education« that was held in João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil from 26-30 July 1994, she proceeds from a historical perspective of popular education to argue for greater involvement on the part of popular educators, theorists and practitioners alike, in the Education for All initiative that was launched in Jomtien in 1990.

Rosa María Torres

From criticism to constructiveness. Popular education, school and »education for all«

Ever since the »Popular Education« movement emerged in Latin America, it has been essentially an adult education movement that has developed within the framework of non-formal education, outside of — and even in opposition to — the formal education system. Accordingly, popular education has often been understood as a synonym for adult education, non-formal education, out-of-school education, and even compensatory, supplementary, or remedial education.

The dominant positions within the movement, and the most widespread concept of popular education both here and abroad, correspond to its traditional notion, which emphasizes the »alternative« nature of popular education in the sense that it constitutes an **alternative to formal schooling**, rather than an **alternative within the formal school system**. In the critical atmosphere of negativism during the 1960s and 1970s, school came to be regarded as space that was lost for — and even conflicting with — popular interests; as a monolithic apparatus that served to reproduce dominant ideology, a domesticating and alienating machine, a stronghold of bourgeois values, etc. And teachers came to be seen as active accomplices in the domesticating process. They were stigmatized as agents in the reproduction and dissemination of dominant ideology and the status quo, basically conservative individuals, opposed to change, and so on.

Education provided in schools came to be known as »traditional education« (best characterized under the »banking« notion), while popular education came to be known as an »alternative form of education«, the features of which are contrary to traditional education in virtually every respect. This interpretation led to a notorious over-simplification of the issue, dichotomizing formal education and popular education, so that the different directions were even expressed in pairs of opposites: bourgeoisie/popular, authoritarian/democratic, vertical/horizontal, monologue/dialogue, acritical/critical, domesticating/liberating, etc.

The complete stigmatization of school and the idealization of popular education led proponents of the latter to reject school as a legitimate claim of the popular sectors and as a space to fight for a different kind of education.

Hope was abandoned in the school system. Education outside school and informal education became the only framework for education that was democratic, critical, participatory, emancipating, and oriented to the popular sectors.

Hope was abandoned in teachers. Non-teachers were sought to advance the cause of education. The typical profile for the ideal popular educator was a lay person without any teacher's training (popular leaders from the community, students, or professionals in general) whose chief qualification for the vocation was social and political commitment.

Hope was abandoned in the verbs **to educate** and **to teach**. They were held to be actions of a directed nature saddled with an authoritarian tradition. Alternative terms were found (to share knowledge, exchange knowledge, exchange experience, collective reflection) and the word »educator« was replaced by new designations (facilitators, animators, coordinators, monitors, promoters).

Hope was abandoned in school curricula, which were seen as alienating and domesticating, and a groping search began for alternative contents and methods. The traditional body of theory and praxis in the field of education was rejected, and attention focused — gropingly as well — on education geared specifically to adults, in particular to adults within the popular sectors.

Hope was abandoned in developments in the area of educational theory and research within the framework of the formal school system. Scientific knowledge and the important conceptual, theoretical, and methodological instruments developed in the field of education were rejected, and, starting from zero, attempts were made to improvise.

In short, hope was abandoned in everything related to the education system — teachers and administrators, curricula and text books, ministries and classrooms, all of which were written off as inherently incompatible with the interests of the popular sectors and with the vision of popular education. And the proponents of popular education invested all their energy in the construction of a utopian education that would produce popular subjects capable of creating a new social order based on justice, equality, and solidarity, but that paradoxically would work on the fringe of society outside the education system. The institution through which the greater majority of Latin American children pass, the establishment that directly or indirectly influences the lives of the greater majority of the population, the privilege that every father and mother aspires for their children — namely EDUCATION — was abandoned and left in the hands of others.

By focusing on »what ought to be« (utopia), popular education ignored the immediate and concrete reality of education, and disregarded what was happening in the way of analysis, what was changing in the field of education. Basically, it confined itself to criticizing the formal school system. Rather than taking an analytical approach to the situation in order to better comprehend the problems, redefine policies, and develop viable proposals for transformation, it took recourse to a descriptive line of attack using adjectives like »traditional«, »banking«, »authoritarian«, »elitist«, »bourgeois«, »domesticating«, »bureaucratic«, etc. In short: traditional popular education was content to challenge and denounce school, and distance itself from the formal school system. But it ignored any commitment to transform the school system from within.

So-called »non-formal education« emerged as a world-wide movement in response to the critique of conventional education that grew out of dissatisfaction with the school system. It took a firm hold in Latin America, especially in the popular education sector. Still another international trend developed alongside the »non-formal« concept. It was called »informal education« and stressed the virtues, the richness, and the relevance of learning that takes place in the course of daily life in the immediate surroundings of the home, the community, or at work (under the motto »the best school is life itself«).

In practice, popular education picked up on ideas such as »deschooling« and »anti-school« and became an ally to »reproductivist« visions of education that hurt Latin America by preventing us from comprehending the complexity and dynamics of the school system in its contradictory roles of reproducer as well as transformer of mentalities, attitudes, and social realities. The perspective of school as a monolithic perpetuator of the dominant ideology constituted both a reason and an alibi to abandon the struggle within the school system itself for an education sensitive to the popular interests — or to postpone it until the people »assumed power«, which amounts to the same thing.

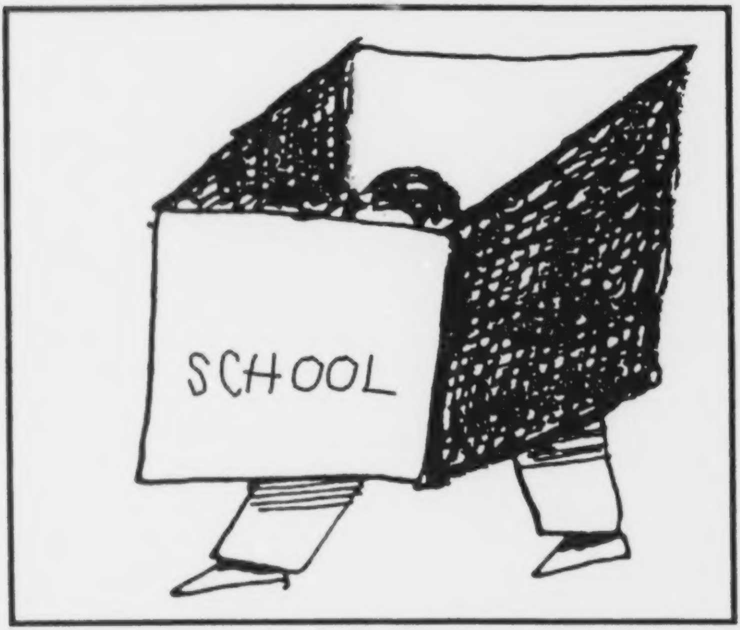
We might remind ourselves that, historically speaking, opposition to school and criticism of the school system are not the property of progressive forces. School has always been subject to attack from very different angles and in very different contexts. Moreover, we should bear in mind that school became established as an institution throughout the world in the face of merciless opposition on the part of the elite and more reactionary classes who feared the education of the masses. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the world is still beset by poverty and illiteracy; it is no accident that 130 million youngsters are still denied access to school, or that there are still close to a billion illiterate adults in the world. In this context, universal and free access to quality schooling is still a basic demand in the struggle of the popular sectors, and it remains a fertile area of endeavour for the sectors committed to justice and social equality.

On the other hand, we must not forget how long the fight has been going on for an alternative to conventional education — an active, critical, relevant, participatory, democratic, and liberating form of education that synthesizes theory and practice, concentrates on the learner's perspectives, and respects his knowledge. That struggle is rooted in a long tradition of progressive education all over the world. Many different philosophies and theories have spawned authentic movements in the interest of change and alternative proposals, and have been put into practice in concrete form in schools.

In other words: over the course of history, it has been the dominant classes which have criticized and even opposed schools. It has been governments and administrations indifferent to human development, particularly to the living conditions and fate of the popular sectors, that have abandoned schools to their own inertia and fate, depriving them of opportunities and resources to convert them into universal places of quality learning. And it has been the world-wide progressive movement that has recognized equitable and democratic education as necessary and possible — a cause worth fighting for — because it is not possible to aim for the ideal of a new society without fashioning a new concept of education, not only for adults and for the poor, but also for children and society as a whole.

The separation of popular education from conventional education — Some negative consequences

> »Mutual distrust exists between conventional schooling and popular education. The serious lack of communication between popular educators (especially those who work in non-government organizations) and educators who work for the state causes them to know next to nothing about each other's work. They tend rather to criticize one another. In the opinion of popular educators, conventional educators are extremely traditional and rigid individuals who perpetuate the system and defend the status quo. Conventional educators look at the conditions under which popular educators carry out their work, the remuneration they receive, the autonomy they enjoy in the work they do



directly with the people, and say 'anybody can do that'. But despite what they think of each other, when they have to work together, it is surprising what they can accomplish.«[1]

»It is more expedient in today's world to view the apparatus of the state as an arena where different concepts can compete. Some concepts, of course, are more apt to be accepted than others, but ascribing that role to government institutions allows at least a logical chance for the concepts of popular education to be implemented within the official sphere, provided they are reasonably presented and backed by forcible arguments. But the existence of such a chance is more than just theoretical; it also derives from the facts of the situation. There is no question that the education system is undergoing a quality crisis all the way up through the highest ranks in the ministries. In response to the situation in some countries, educators from the ranks of popular education (along with their concepts) have been appointed to positions in the official departments that cater for the system's most disadvantaged adults or schools.«[2]

The consequences of the divorce between school and popular education have been negative for both: school could have profited much more, or more directly, through motivation issuing from popular education during the years when its innovative and reformative concepts and practices were in the process of development. At the same time, popular education could have learned from contact with the school; weak points recognized as such could have been strengthened, and progress could have been made in solving familiar problems.

In our opinion, isolation from the reality of formal schooling has had negative implications for the concepts and development of popular education. The concept has marginalized itself and has impoverished itself in the process, making itself less effective as an alternative education movement. The demand for a reformation and rethinking process in popular education today implies an inevitable re-examination of its relation to schooling, the school system, and formal education.

The *(auto)marginalization* of popular education, and how it relates to the tasks of education on the national and regional level

In the context of Latin American education, popular education has come to be regarded as an education movement that operates on the periphery of the school system in sectors ignored by the school system — adults and the poor; a movement of activists, volunteers, lay people, para-professionals, good-hearted people, or subversives and radicals who use education as a tool to awaken consciousness, to encourage protest and political action; small-scale, localized, marginalized, short-term programmes that are marked by instability, that depend on external funding, that are deficient in efficacy and accountability, and that are sponsored by communities or neighbourhood organizations and directed by professionals or activists connected with non-government organizations.

The agents of popular education have absented themselves from the decision-making process in matters of educational policy. They have ignored issues of greater and lesser consequence in national, regional, or international circles alike. For the most part, they have not even kept themselves informed about relevant policy issues. They have kept to themselves within the restricted sphere of adult and non-formal education, ignoring what was happening at the heart of the system, and becoming less and less able to understand or influence what was going on. They have gradually lost their ability to take part in the discussions, and are no longer able to serve as mediators on behalf of the popular sectors or to represent their demands in the area of education.

For better or worse, the fact remains that the formal education system is the largest and most widespread agent of systematic education in the world, the main source of basic education for most of the world's people, the cradle, whether out of advocacy or opposition, of society's definitions for educational philosophies, values, and practices. This is implicit in the very designations »non-formal education« and »informal education«. Formal education is the gauge for determining the rules, patterns, behaviours, structures, and expectations of everything educational, especially so in Latin America which has the highest rates of school enrolment in the world, not only on the primary level, but also on post-secondary, and even university levels. To reject school in Latin America is to reject the education institution par excellence, which itself is a product of popular struggle. Indeed, the rapid expansion of schooling in this part of the world is a triumph of democracy in our societies. The high repetition and desertion rates characteristic of Latin American school systems should not only be interpreted as indicators of failure, but also as corollaries of the unprecedented process of democratization within the school.

The educational and pedagogical impoverishment of popular education

The theoretical weaknesses of popular education, the deficient training of many of its workers, the limitations of its educational schemes, the rigidity of its pedagogical concepts and methodology, and the deficiencies in its educational planning and administrative material are widely acknowledged. To a large extent, they are due to the fact that popular education has isolated itself from the mainstream of education.

Isolation from school has secluded the agents of popular education (theorists and practitioners alike) from the accumulated body of theory, knowledge, and experience in the field of education on national, regional, and world levels. Not only have knowledge and experience been rejected as the basis for educational planning and pedagogical reflection; for years, new and important findings in the dynamic and growing areas of educational research and the science of education have been completely ignored. Even such a vital and precious component of popular education as literacy training is still practically virgin territory. Nothing has been borrowed from the ample body of important developments in theory and methodology that have been taking place in the area of literacy training for children. The roads of literacy training for adults and for children have run parallel to one another with virtually no points of contact. The loser along the way, however, has been literacy training for adults. Trapped in a state of total inertia and the repetition of old clichés, it is confronted today by widespread scepticism and a consequent loss of legitimacy and resources.

Pedagogical reflection has come to a standstill. Pedagogy has been reduced to method, and method to techniques and dynamics. With a fixed and repetitive pallet of general pedagogical principles, and a large inventory of techniques for motivating group dynamics, popular education has come to regard pedagogy — the chief focus of education, the crux of what popular education criticizes in formal education — as an issue that no longer needs to be resolved. Popular education has ignored pedagogical findings in the study of education for children and the need to become familiar with them if only for the sake of a stronger basis for criticism. The intention was to start from base one, and create a monument to the way adults learn, but not through efforts to find out how adult learning differs from childhood learning through diligent study and research. Consequently, no progress can be expected from that angle. That would have made a closer scrutiny of school inevitable. But in the sluggish currents of adult education it was taboo to study education for children and school pedagogy.

In good measure, the »crisis of popular education« that we hear so much about today is a product of historical isolation from formal education, of that self-imposed isolation within the field that has marginalized popular educators from the knowledge base of conventional education — its realities, its policies, and its programmes — nationally, regionally, and globally.

Educational practice geared to local social change and the inefficacy of popular education

By rejecting schools as a legitimate place for its studies, work, and struggles, popular education failed to avail itself of school as a legitimate forum for the demands of the popular sectors — the people for and with whom it proposed to work. In the eyes of the people who make up the popular sectors, school remains the most important and secure route to education, and the key to social and economic advancement for themselves and their children. In all their multiplicity, the popular sectors include mothers and fathers whose everyday lives are tied to school in a very real sense through their children and their aspirations for their children.

Time and again studies and evaluations have shown that there is no decrease in the demand for education despite worsening conditions of poverty, disenchantment with what the school system has to offer, and decreasing expectations in the value of education as a mechanism for upward mobility and socio-economic advancement. Statistics on schooling in Latin America demonstrate surprisingly high school-retention figures in particular, despite the costs of education (tangible as well as hidden) and the exaggerated phenomenon of repetition (it takes an average of two years for a Latin American child to be promoted from one grade to the next, and fifty percent of all children are required to repeat the first grade). Latin American children, including those who have to repeat several grades, start to leave school at the age of 12 or 13. But the fact remains that in spite of everything, parents continue to value schooling not only for their children, but also for themselves. If conditions are appropriate, adults of all ages are inclined to learn and enrol in literacy training schemes or basic adult education programmes. The anti-schooling concept of popular education, which often denies schooling as a genuine form of popular or even adult education, is inconsistent with the aspirations of many young people and adults, who, if they have access to schooling at all, would prefer the type that promises to provide the equivalence of regular primary education and possibilities for continued studies through »regular« channels.

If it is a premise — as popular education itself insists — that social and pedagogical principles require any democratic endeavour in the provision of education to »proceed from the reality and needs of the learner«, then it can only be consistent with that premise to assume that school and the school approach to adult education are worthwhile starting points for addressing the expectations of the popular sectors. The appropriate response, rather than denying school, would be to promote a different type of school and schooling; to diversify educational programmes for young people and adults in a way that acknowledges a wide range of different varieties — opened and closed, structured or unstructured, in the style of school or in a different style; to contribute to modifying popular perceptions about school, about what is good or bad in educational material, and to help the popular sectors develop the skills they need to make their demand for education a demand for quality education. These are all tasks of popular education, based on its own frame of reference and its commitment to the popular sectors.

Positions within popular education ideology have always proposed the need to consider education and the transformation of education as a whole, and, accordingly, to see »popular education« as an **alternative education concept for society as a whole**. We need only recall Paulo Freire and his insistent pleas for such a perspective: his criticism of the »banking« notion of education and his proposal for a »liberating concept of education« were not confined to adult education, much less to adult literacy training. His criticism and ideas applied to education in a much broader sense.

Two important current developments have given impetus to the rethinking and reorientation process that popular education is experiencing:

a. the dramatic portrait of education in Latin American and Caribbean countries, particularly in the area of basic education for children, youth, and adults, and growing public awareness of the situation (see Box 1); and

b. the launching of the world-wide »Education for All« initiative, which has gained considerable momentum in Latin America.

The situation of basic education in Latin America and the Caribbean

According to international estimates, Latin America, including the Caribbean, comes closer than any other region of the world to achieving the goal of »education for all«. The factors contributing to this impression include rapid expansion of the education system in recent decades, high average rates of school enrolment, gender parity in enrolment figures and relatively low adult illiteracy rates according to official statistics (15%).

As a result of quantitative data of this nature, the region has earned the reputation of having all but solved the problem of access to school, if not the problem of schooling itself. This misrepresentation of the situation is due, among other things, to current confusion over the distinction between »the universalization of primary school« and »universal access to primary school« as well as the deceptive picture reflected in national as well as in regional averages. Those data obscure significant disparities among the various countries and within the countries themselves, serious problems in the quality and relevance of education, social injustice and discrimination.

Resting on the laurels of its expansion and such high primary school enrolment figures, the region neglected to take a closer look at what was happening with teachers and students within the classroom. Without doubt, the majority of Latin American children are able to enter the first grade, but there are also many who have to repeat one or more grades, who have to withdraw from school prematurely, who are forced to resign themselves to the small rural school that does not offer a complete primary school education, or who for any number of other reasons, are never able to finish school. It may be true, as far as access to school is concerned, that there is gender parity — in some cases the number of girls even exceeds the number of boys, a situation which is still a very remote prospect in other regions of the world. But it is also true that women (students and teachers alike) continue to face discrimination in the school system, and their numbers shrink progressively in comparison to figures for men as the education pyramid tapers. On the other hand, lack of gender equality is demonstrated in the fact that

Box 1
The state of basic education in Latin America

Primary education

- **Not all children have access to school:** The problem of access has not yet been solved, neither regionally nor nationally. Around 15 per cent of all children remain without access to schooling. Those most affected are the poor, the people who live in remote areas, and society's least advantaged groups.
- **Many children enter school at a late age:** Between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of all children who enter school enrol late in relation to officially established enrolment ages. The age span for children attending the same grade is considerable. Six-year-olds, pre-adolescents and even adolescents can all share the same classroom. Such heterogeneity complicates teaching and learning, particularly since teacher training programmes, textbooks and even the organizational structure of schools are oriented toward homogenous groups.
- **Nearly half of the students who enrol in the first grade do not complete primary education:** Although between 85 and 90 per cent of all children do attend school, only 47 per cent eventually complete their primary education. That means that out of every hundred children, sixty-three drop out along the way, withdrawing from the system for any number of reasons.
- **Millions of children fail each year:** The majority of children who enter school attend for six years or more, but do not go beyond the third or fourth grade. Repetition rates are very high in the Latin American education system. The Latin American child requires an average of 1.7 years to advance from one schooling level to another. Each year, 32.2 million primary or secondary school students have to repeat a grade, which means an annual budget waste of 5.2 billion dollars.
- **Half of all children who attend school have to repeat the first grade:** Rates of repetition are higher in the first two grades. Nearly fifty per cent of all students require two years to complete the first grade. The incidence of repetition is higher among children of poorer families (60 out of a 100 repeat the first grade) and is directly linked to problems in the teaching of reading and writing.
- **Children learn little at school:** Achievement studies conducted in different countries in recent years show low learning levels, particularly in the area of reading and writing. A study conducted in Mexico (in 1989)

revealed that only 15% of all students who completed primary school were able to read and write comprehensively. UNESCO estimates that half of the students who complete fourth grade are not able to understand what they »read«.

Pre-school programmes

- **Few children attend pre-school programmes (age 0 - 6):** Despite rapid expansion of pre-school education facilities in recent years (nurseries, day-care centers, kindergartens), only 15 per cent of the under-six population has access thereto. Most of those children are 5 to 6 year-olds, and enrolment is mainly in urban areas.

Adult Education

- **More than 40 million adults are illiterate:** According to UNESCO estimates for the region, 15 per cent of all people aged fifteen and over are illiterate. The highest rates of illiteracy are found in seven countries (Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti) in the over-forty age group and in the indigenous population. If current trends continue, 11.1 per cent of the world's population — i.e. 39.3 million people — will be illiterate in the year 2000.

Source: UNESCO-OREALC, Situacion educativo de América Latina y el Caribe (1980-1989). Santiago, 1992

concern starts with the situation for boys. Especially in the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, there is growing preoccupation over the drop-out rate for boys who are forced to take jobs to help meet their families' survival needs.

The launching of the initiative »Education for All«

The World Conference on »Education for All« took place in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990. The outcome of that Conference, the World Declaration on Education for All, which was ratified by 155 nations, commits the governments of the world and the international community to guarantee the provision of basic education of acceptable quality for all children, youth, and adults by the year 2000.

What is meant by »Education for All« is »**Basic** Education for All«. Basic education refers to education that enables people to meet their basic learning needs. And basic learning needs, in turn, refer to the composite knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for human beings:

1. to survive;
2. to develop their fullest potential;
3. to live a decent life and earn a living under decent conditions;
4. to participate fully in the process of development;
5. to improve the quality of their lives;
6. to make informed decisions; and
7. to learn how to keep on learning.

Considering that different groups of people have different basic needs, it follows that there also have to be different basic learning needs and different modalities for meeting those needs. Accordingly, basic learning needs vary from country to country, and from culture to culture. They are different in different sectors and social groups (according to race, age, gender, culture, religion, location, etc.), and they are in a continuous state of flux. With this in mind, before proposing educational reform or any specific curricula, we must recognize educational change as a permanent condition geared to the constant readjustment and updating of educational contents as well as teaching and learning modes.

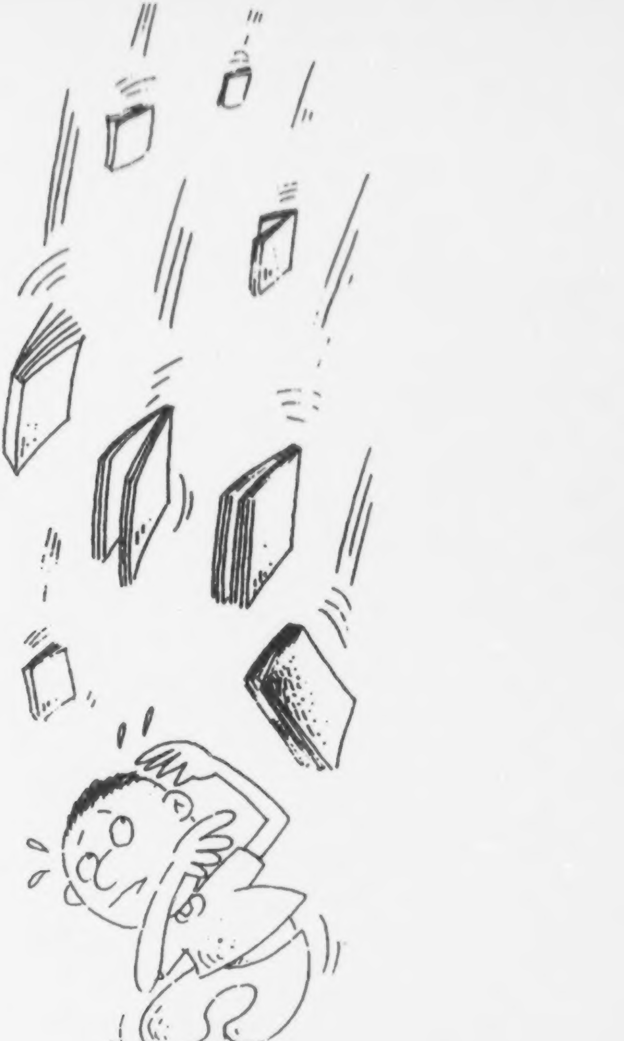
Within the frame of basic education, priority is given to primary education, and in particular to the objective of universal primary education which is regarded as the spearhead or principal system for the transmission of basic education outside the family.

The Conference was valuable because it put the spotlight on education. It called the world's attention to the importance and priority character of education — especially basic education — and obliged the ratifying countries to reach the following goals by the year 2000:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged, and disabled children;
2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as »basic«);
3. Improvement in learning achievement;
4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to one-half its 1990 level;
5. Expansion of provisions of basic education, and training for youth and adults;
6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills, and values required for better living, and sound and sustainable development, made available through all educational channels.

The Conference agreed on the following course of action:

- An »expanded vision« of basic education must be adopted (see Box 2).
- Basic education should be provided to all children, youth, and adults.
- Priority must be given to girls and women.
- Special attention must be given to disadvantaged groups and disabled persons.



- The focus of basic education must be on actual learning acquisition rather than upon formal aspects such as numbers of years in schools or certification.

- Partnerships and concerted efforts should be strengthened and should involve both government and civilian society in the implementation of the goal of Education for All.

The Conference was sponsored by four international agencies which are directly involved in the execution of the provisions of the Declaration and follow-up measures: three UN agencies — UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) and UNDP (the United Nations Development Programme); and the World Bank.

»Education for All« is not merely a document or a declaration. It has become the principal framework of the present decade for the design and execution of educational policies on both global and national levels, particularly where basic education is concerned. Consequently, it is inconceivable for anyone who is engaged in the field of education or interested in educational issues to ignore its existence or abstain from becoming involved in discourse related to what it proposes and how it should be implemented.

In order to comprehend conditions and developments in a national — or even local — context so as to be able to take effective action in today's global and interdependent world, it is essential to break away from a localist frame of mind, and look beyond national and institutional borders. We are witnessing a progressive tendency in the world today to »globalize« educational issues — a tendency that is reflected, inter alia, in a surprizing degree of homogeneity throughout the world, both in government and non-government circles, in analytical studies, proposals for courses of action, policies, strategies, and educational programmes, and all this, paradoxically, in a world that is becoming more and more heterogeneous, and, at the same time, more and more aware of differences and the need to respect diversity. Familiar premises and objectives like **quality, efficiency, equity, relevance, autonomy, decentralization, privatization, modernization, innovation, community participation, positive discrimination, evaluation of results, reform**, and others, form part of internationally recognized and accepted issues of education. Accordingly, what may seem »national«, unique, and even innovative within a certain country, or even within a specific programme, is often part of a much broader movement of reforms that are taking place not only in neighbouring countries, but in other regions of the developing world as well. As in so many other fields, the borders between »national« and »international« are also becoming less and less conspicuous in the field of education.

Neither popular education nor any other education movement that seeks innovation, and endeavours to grasp and effectively transform reality, can turn their backs thereto or ignore other developments in our contemporary world. In a global society like ours is today, the slogan »act locally but think globally« applies to government and non-government programmes alike, to the public sphere just as to the private sphere, and to micro-level community projects as well as macro-level national policy.

The concept »Education for All« — Weaknesses and potentials

Needless to say, the strategies proposed at Jomtien are not without weaknesses. Criticism has come from various angles, both political and ideological, and reservations have been expressed about the professional soundness of the concept and the global viability of the initiative and its goals. Still, the ideas of Jomtien are revolutionary in many respects. They aim at fundamental reform of the

Box 2

Basic Education

Limited Vision	*Expanded Vision (Jomtien)*
BE is for children.	BE is for children, youth and adults.
BE takes place in the school.	BE takes place in and out of school.
BE refers to primary school education or its equivalent.	BE cannot be measured by numbers of certificates, but rather by learning achievement.
The learning of a specific amount of material or subjects is the guarantee for BE.	The ability to meet basic learning needs is the guarantee for BE.
The only kind of knowledge that is recognized as valid is the knowledge transmitted in the school system through a systematic education programme.	BE recognizes the validity of traditional knowledge.
BE is confined to a specific phase of life.	BE is a lifelong process that begins at birth.
BE is homogeneous and identical for everyone.	BE is differentiated (because every group and culture has its own distinct basic learning needs).
BE is static and does not tend to change.	BE is dynamic and subject to change.
BE is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.	BE involves every ministry and every government authority responsible for educational activities.
BE is a government responsibility.	BE is the responsibility of government as well as of society as a whole, and educational activities therefore require consensus and coordination.

Source: Torres, Rosa Maria, »¿En que consiste la visión ampliada de la educación básica?«, in: Educación en los Medios, No. 19, Instituto FRONESIS, Quito, 1993.

school system and reflect a broadened and revised vision of education that is in complete harmony with the aims of popular education.

This is aptly expressed by two authors closely involved with popular education who have extensive work experience in the field, both nationally and internationally:

> »'Education for All'«, in the long run, can provide a stage for pursuing the main lines of popular education strategy. It offers opportunities for building tactical alliances in the interest of the popular sectors and their movements and organizations to better serve their needs in the sense of transformation. The question our popular education movement now faces is whether its capacity for strategic reasoning has grown enough. Will it be able to strategically analyze and gauge international trends, and ally itself with the ones that can benefit its growth and organic development in congruence with its fundamental principles?«[3]

> »The Jomtien vision of education contains a wealth of educational concepts, but at the same time it is pragmatic. While recognizing the necessity to learn how to read and write, to acquire life's basic skills and job know-how, it also emphasizes human development. True, the concept may be built on the 'intellectual dream' that information — along with modern mass communication media — can give birth to knowledge and influence the quality of life. There is a great deal of faith in knowledge. Nevertheless, this faith in the powers of information has a distinct accent: cultural diversity, the richness of traditions, the importance of the affective, spiritual and aesthetic sides of human beings.«[4]

Unfortunately, key sectors of the Latin American education community — teachers, specialists, research scientists, universities, non-government organizations — remain uninformed about the concept of »Education for All«, and are not contributing to the debate over the issue or the realization of its goals. Arguments either for or against the concept are often based on preconceived notions or financial considerations rather than on comprehensive knowledge and analysis of the concept.

It is evident that the proposal must be studied, that the population must be informed about it on a large-scale basis, that public debate must be promoted on its issues as well as on the concrete policies and programmes developing within its framework. There is no question that popular education in Latin America could and should make a contribution in this connection.

A new era for popular education with new challenges

Today's world and the world of Latin America are very different from the world that served as the framework for the inception and development of popular education. Many fronts have suffered deterioration (life in general, the circumstances under which most of the world's population live, the quality of education, the environment). And yet, other fronts have witnessed progress, and many difficulties have been overcome. The word »deterioration« is too categorical to reflect the multi-dimensional complexity, the interrelated and contradictory nature of the changes that have been taking place on every plane in recent years. Anyone associated with the development of major theories and strategic long-range visions finds it difficult today, when looking at current trends, to predict even the immediate future.

»Crisis« is a word that is heard frequently in discourse today. People speak of the economic crisis, the social crisis, the crises of paradigms, of values, of ideology, of education, and, last not least, of popular education. The prefix »re« that implies something »new«, a »new beginning«, fits easily in front of any number of verbs: rethink, re-establish, re-form, re-design, re-learn, re-cycle, re-invent.

There is no question that the so-called »education crisis« has positive aspects of a highly productive nature. New focus is directed to old problems plaguing the school system and cultural establishments: the issues of education, which until recently were in the exclusive domain of education ministries, specialists, and teachers, have begun to interest the rest of society. Concern for education has begun to spread to sectors not traditionally related to education — to business sectors, example given, or the communication media.

Now, at a time when the »popular education crisis« has become an issue, it would seem to be the most opportune and propitious moment for educational change. On the one hand, we are witnessing the rebirth of public school and the struggle for quality public schooling, an upsurge of participation and social mobilization in matters of education, an increase in national, regional; and global resources for education, an emphasis on education in national and international agendas. And on the other, we see a process of critical self-examination in popular education circles, an acknowledgement of an accumulation of problems within the sphere, a situation which would have been inconceivable scarcely a decade ago when criticism of popular education, however sporadic and timid, was regarded as reactionary — the work of the enemy — but which now comes as a breath of fresh air to the field, opening it to the recognition of the need for change from within.

There are some within the popular education movement who even view the »crisis of paradigms« as a chance to break free from preconceived models, an invitation to innovate, to conquer new space, to undertake new adventures.[5] And there are many who see the chance to fundamentally revise the »alternativism« approach that has come to characterize popular education, who propose that popular education should shift its position in theory and praxis, and assume a new role in relation to school and to education as a system and as national policy.

Right now, in view of its wealth and long tradition of experience in working with adults in popular sectors, popular education is in a particularly favourable position to address a key segment of the popular adult sector in any education system — its teachers, the vanguard of mobilization for any kind of change — and to tackle one of the most critical problems facing education today — educator training in the area of (formal and non-formal) adult education, an area which official policies have sorely neglected. It is time to recognize that teachers, who were once stamped as agents and reproducers of dominant ideology, are, in fact, popular subjects, a public sector whose salaries, life style, and working conditions have seriously deteriorated over the past years. It is time to recognize that teachers are also adults, and that educator training is a part of (formal and non-formal) adult education.

That, of course, does not mean that popular educators should not concentrate on anything but »taking over« government positions, or »becoming involved« in the school system so as to »introduce« the focuses and principles of popular education, and »contribute« to its reform according to their experience. Such a position would still be an outside approach, now as before, the only difference being that it would adopt a »salvation« or »donor« angle instead of a »critical« or »observer« one. It would be a new black/white position, one that rejects school (denying its strengths and potentials, and the very real innovative processes that operate from within the system), one that idealizes popular education (in disregard of the crisis controversy within its own ranks, without acknowledging its own weakness and limitations, without being sensitive to the criticism or the process of critical self-analysis which have helped to nourish reform and renewal within the field).

The popular education movement as a whole must recognize how important it is to learn and relearn what education is all about. Education has made significant progress as a field of scientific knowledge. It has developed into a specialization, and in recent years has demonstrated an unprecedented degree of dynamism. There is no question that much more remains to be learned than is already known, but it would be impossible for anyone, no matter how specialized, to acquire and assimilate all the knowledge available in the world. Indeed, the breach between everyday educational praxis and the available store of knowledge seems to be growing wider rather than shrinking, partly because of the tight bottleneck that exists in the mass dissemination of such knowledge. Educational practice (both formal and non-formal, whether in or out of school) continues in good measure to reproduce knowledge that is obsolete and stagnant. It lags behind the spectacular achievements of technology (with all the potential they imply for teaching), and, even worse, has not benefited from the scientific progress, research, and proposals for change that have proliferated in the field of education over the past decades.

New opportunities and new challenges demand current information, skills, and know-how — not just the type produced through practical experience, but also the kind acquired through systematic study and learning. The education system and the people who work in it at every level — from ministerial offices down to the classroom — possess specialized knowledge and know-how developed in their domain — knowledge and know-how no less specialized than that obtained through the practice of non-formal and out-of-school education. A massive programme must be launched. National education policies and strategies need to be formulated and designed. An effective system must be established or perfected for educational planning and the management, monitoring, and evaluation of educational programmes. Loans and covenants must be negotiated in every conceivable sector, and concerted efforts must be made toward consensus. All these are tasks that demand a high degree of technical competence, political sensibility, and social responsibility. It is not just a simple question of scale. Much more is involved in the step from micro to macro, from a minor project to a major programme, from a pilot experience to large-scale policy, from the introduction of innovation to its expansion and generalization, from a community to a national context, from the arrangement of small credits to the negotiation of substantial international loans.

In the realm of education, as in any other realm, dialogue around policy requires high-level proficiency and technical competence. If the agents of popular education — and non-government organizations in general — intend to become partners in dialogue with governments and international organizations, if they expect to play an influential role in the education debate and the design of public policies, they must demonstrate their competence through coherent and effective action.

The transition from an onlooker approach to one of partners in dialogue, from a position of criticism to one of constructiveness — that is the great challenge facing our sector. It is a challenge that remains a future prospect for the »movement« — in the dynamic sense of the word — but one that has begun to take root in the »official« popular education debate, and, above all, in numerous practices and processes of popular education throughout the continent. During the past few years, renowned theorists and practitioners in the popular education movement have begun to assume the role of protagonists. Many now occupy positions of high responsibility in the government sphere (ministers, department heads, programme or project directors, campaign managers); others are working in agencies and international organizations.

Much experience has already been gained at very different levels against very different backgrounds and with very different approaches, both in the popular education movement as well as in other contexts. And such experience is already helping to bring about a closer union between popular education and the school system. There are many positive examples that illustrate how complementary such a union can be. They prove that cooperation can become a dynamic force in dealing with the problems of education. They show »by doing« that concerted action can lead to mutual enrichment and help find solutions to the problems of education that have such negative and irreversible consequences for the popular sectors, for education continues to be one of the most serious and complex problems facing the world today.

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Crispino Lobo / Gudrun Kochendürfer-Lucius
The Rain Decided to Help us.
Participatory Watershed Management
in the State of Maharashtra, India.

This case study, published by the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, describes the process of participation during the implementation of a watershed development program in the village of Pimpalgaon Wagha in India. It provides useful insights into the process of participatory development by presenting the life stories of certain villagers of Pimpalgaon Wagha. The study should be of interest to students and development practioniers alike.

Crispino Lobo is coordinator of the Indo-German Watershed Program in Maharashtra, India. Gudrun Kochendürfer-Lucius is senior policy planner at the GTZ and chair of macroeconomics and development economics at Giessen University in Germany.

The publication can be ordered from:

Distribution Unit, Office of the Publisher, The World Bank, 1818 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433, USA, e-mail: books@workdbank.org or *Publications, Banque mondiale, 66, avenue d'Iéna, 75116 Paris, France.*

»Quo Vadis, Adult Education?« is a question that has often been posed in recent editions of our journal. Have we reached a turning point which challenges our basic principles and practices? Has the world undergone such fundamental change after the fall of the Wall and the collapse of »real socialism« that we adult educators have to find new answers to new problems? Are utopias still valid? Should society still be changed?

Raúl Aramendy is an Argentine adult educator with a broad background of professional experience in the field. He is director of the »Centro Ecuménico de Educación Popular CEDEPO«, one of the original members of the Latin American Council of Adult Education CEAAL.

Raúl Aramendy

An uninvited speaker is asked to leave, but he doesn't go...

> »We are surrounded by pragmatic discourse that would have us adapt to the facts of reality. Dream, and utopia, are called not only useless, but positively impeding. (After all, they are an intrinsic part of any educational practice with the power to unmask the dominant lies.) It may seem strange, then, that I should write a book called **Pedagogy of Hope: Pedagogy of the Oppressed Revisited**«.
>
> Paulo Freire[1]

The pitfalls of intelligence

There is an anecdote told by Rubem Alves, a Brazilian educator, about two monkeys who fell into a trap and were sent to a circus. It was obvious that one of them was brighter than the other. In no time at all, he had learned to balance himself on a big ball and ride a unicycle. His picture began appearing on circus posters. Everyone applauded him: »What a smart animal!« they would say. The other monkey refused to learn. He kept to himself on the side. The trainer tried to coax him with promises and threats, but failed to elicit any sign of comprehension. They called in the circus psychologist whose diagnosis was plain: »There's no use in trying. It's his low IQ.« So he was abandoned in a corner as untrainable and useless. There were no posters with his picture. There was no applause...Time passed. The economy took a turn for the worse, and the circus went bankrupt. It was decided that the most charitable solution for the animals would be to return them to the jungle. And so the two monkeys were sent on a long trip back home. About halfway through their journey, the unteachable monkey began to recover from his lethargy in apparent anticipation of former places and familiar fragrances, while his talented friend bounced soberly on the ball that was a final memento of his life in the circus. At last they arrived at their destination and were set free. A smile broke out on the unskilled monkey's face. With a cry of joy, he leapt to embrace the world of beauty he had never forgotten. The skilful monkey climbed onto his ball and began the performance he knew so well. It was the only thing he could do. Remembering the cheers of the children, the smell of popcorn, the music of the band, and the feats of daring on the flying trapeze, he suddenly realized: Some kinds of intelligence are suited for the circus; but they serve no use in real life. There was much he had to forget to prove his skill. And his success at forgetting was to be his doom.

The concept of learning known as *educación popular* or »popular education« has traversed almost thirty years of evolution in practice, discourse and theory. During that time, it has grown into a pedagogical, sociological, and political force of such magnitude that its range of influence meanwhile extends far beyond the borders of Latin America. The notion has been adopted and promoted by thousands of groups. In view of its success in Latin America, its supporters, as well as many observers, have come to speak of »the popular education movement«.

Over the past few years, discussion within the movement has focused on the role of popular education in Latin America in the context of today's world in an effort to redefine its essence and function. The central issue is whether the point of departure for popular education in its present form has changed so radically as to require a new direction.

There are at least three different ways of looking at the problem. The first, and probably most popular, is a categorically critical approach to traditional popular education. It sees the need to come up with a totally new concept, and considers it basic to the »rethinking« process to ignore traditional ideas and theories about popular education.

The second view is a less-publicized stand taken by very few writers. But it represents the opinion of hundreds of popular educators immersed in the practice of popular education. For them, the process of rethinking popular education is a verbose demonstration of mental gymnastics that is foreign to concrete educational practice — a mere academic exercise with no bearing on the reality confronting grass-roots educators.

The third approach to the issue, and to my mind the most sensible, sees the rethinking of popular education as one of our many concerns. It does have a place on our agenda of things to discuss in the interest of theory, but it should not become our only concern, and certainly not our main one.

In other words, we should carry on our debate without rash criticism. The point is clear in the tale of the two monkeys: We must not let momentary fascination for clever balancing tricks blind us to other kinds of intelligence. We should not lose sight of the essential idea behind popular education, the idea that motivated its origin and shaped its historical tradition. It pursues its purpose as a practice-oriented discipline. It is more concerned with creating a link between education and active intervention to transform the world then with seeking to understand it. Theorizing for the sake of understanding is only justified as a task of popular education insofar as it effectively contributes to the process of transformation. For our continent's grass-roots educators, popular education has always signified commitment in the cause of the poor, the oppressed, and the exploited. This is not likely to change even after the phase of »rethinking« popular education has become part of history. It is a way of life — one that many theorists would like to see re-oriented to fulfil other — more functional — purposes in today's world that runs according to a system of injustice. This is how we got our start — from our stand of opposition as education workers — a »different type of intellectual« with »a different way of living according to a different standpoint — one which identifies with the victims of injustice«.

In my opinion, it would be wise not only to ask what is being discussed, but also who is taking part in the discussion, how it is being conducted, and to what end. We should ask what the debate has to do with the process that is going on to restore hope and the utopia of liberation to most of the world's population who — today more than ever — suffer the consequences of capitalism (neoliberal or not): illiteracy, unemployment, hunger, premature mortality, repression, and all those other injustices of the past that still persist in economies that are based on a social class system and motivated by profit.

Another key question concerns the thousands of grass-roots educators who work with the popular sectors, and the leaders of the popular movement who work with those educators. How are they taking part in the debate?

How is the debate being conducted? Is it based on the systematic study of concrete experiences in popular education, or on »papers« written in the solitude of an intellectual's office in the best style of the liberal bourgeoisie? What kind of language is used in the discussion — the language of academics responsible for the thought and logic of our universities, or the language of the people with whom thousands of dedicated popular educators work — educators who are committed to the struggles of those people, who suffer with them in their defeats and celebrate with them in their triumphs? What kind of language should be used so that it can deepen the commitment of those educators and increase the efficiency of their work in the interest of the victims of the type of injustice that motivates our popular education practice? What kind of language is best suited for us to organize our thoughts so that we can discuss the principles of popular education, but also so that we can address other issues of equal importance — the authenticity of our purpose, for example, or the efficacy of popular education?

How do we view the historical tradition of popular education? From an angle of recognition and respect? I ask myself this question because I frequently find that so-called innovative writings follow the same patterns used in some of the more pitiless criticisms of Paulo Freire (the distinguished Brazilian educator), where words are often taken out of context or distorted, or where ideas in Paulo's earlier writings were criticized that he himself had already, more than once, criticized, and revised. To say that the awakening of critical consciousness is the focal point of popular education, for instance, is to ignore or devalue other historical facets of popular education (or at least of most popular education experiences) like individual and communal self-esteem (which is a component of almost all popular education experiences), or grass-roots organization (the creation of the collective subject rather than just the awakening of a critical spirit or consciousness on an individual basis), or the recognition of feelings and emotions as basic elements in the construction of knowledge, consciousness, and organization. (The concept of *sentipensante*, a union of feeling and rational thinking, was not a product of the present debate; it is rather one of the most basic components of popular education, one that can be found in thousands of experiences.) Early on in its tradition, popular education recognized the importance of feelings and emotions in the cultural processes of the popular sectors. It was precisely that fact that led other »intellectuals«, who tend to produce analyses in abundance but do not have practical experience, and who supposedly take an approach in opposition to those who would want us »to reconstruct« almost everything today, to accuse our approach of the flaws of »empiricism«, »disregard for scientific methods«, »lack of precision«, etc., etc.

Admittedly, in the multifaceted stream of Latin American popular education there were — and still are — tendencies toward »rationalism«. But the accusation that it suffers from »rationalism« can be dismissed with one more example: During the twenty or thirty years before the »reconstruction« debate was initiated, religion, with all its many non-rational aspects, had an important place in most popular education experiences. It has been basic to the practice of popular education from the very beginning (perhaps for the simple fact of the strong Christian presence that exists in the movement).

Speaking in terms of a more general nature: One of the many directions of popular education, both in theory and practice, continues, as in the past, to emphasize a rational approach to »critical consciousness«, not only in reference to the subjects, but also in an overall historical and social context. But at the same time, for the sake of a serious analysis that respects historical facts, it must be pointed out that a growing tendency has existed in several of the different currents within the stream of popular education (in some for many years already) to view »the awakening of critical consciousness« as one component in a more integrated and non-rationalist approach to the work of transformation. In the same way, particularly in recent years, we have been witnessing the evolution of a direction, albeit not yet clearly defined and more in discourse over theory than in actual practice, that would dilute the concept of

»critical consciousness« or even exclude it from popular education processes in conformity with (for the most part tacit) acceptance of the »inevitability« of capitalist hegemony.

Some of the claims circulating in the course of the debate are not only reckless but positively unfounded. They do more to harm popular education than to advance the debate. They say, for example, that popular education would have educators be the »bearers of true knowledge«, when just the opposite is true. It is one of the chief tenets of popular education that knowledge is attained in a collective process involving both educators and learners. The contribution of educators is considered relative (sometimes to an exaggerated degree).

We can find a definition of popular education, example given, in the brief historical review that Carlos Rodrigues Brandao wrote on the origins of popular education.[2] An approximate translation reads as follows: In its most consequent forms, which are found in innumerable initiatives throughout the continent, popular education is no more than a first moment in the passage from an education for the people to an education created by the people. In the process of transition, the people gradually change from economic subjects into political subjects — not because they are educated among educators, but because the inclusion of popular education in their political work is a learning experience for both learner and educator — and, much later, many histories later, as they regain proprietorship over themselves, they little by little convert »education« into »their own education«.

Perhaps the time has come to insist on a new focus in the »rethinking debate«: To keep in mind the entire course of popular education's history from its inception up to the present day. To avoid the dangerous — indeed suicidal — position that ignores the historical process of popular education, its past, its results and debates, its achievements and errors, its tendencies and teachings. To avoid falling into the snare of modernist and post-modernist cultural hegemony and overlook, ignore, neglect, and forget the historical dimension of the facts. Otherwise, we would be an easy prey — in this debate as well as in others — to mentalities and comportment that proceed on the implicit assumption that the past must always be overcome by what is »modern«, »novel«, or »new« (I take the liberty of using inverted commas). For indifference to history tends to make the past seem worse than the present. If we ignore the past or only look at popular education of the 1990s — which in end effect is the same thing (it ignores the past) — every statement, every affirmation or concept we make might »discover« or »reinitiate« questions already discovered or initiated long time ago. This might be a — certainly more subtle — manner to maintain that »history has ended« so as to lend credibility to the claim that the new epoch of foregoing history is, in reality, a completely new history, without continuity and not derived from known history. Regarded in this light, science (with all its limitations) would cease to help us learn from the past. Instead, it would only serve to confirm what is original and inevitable (since no other reality is possible), what has come to replace the past, to govern a new way of proceeding that consists only of the present and a future that is a reflection of that present. There could be no break with the past. There could be no revolution. The future would no longer be the result of a long process enveloped in our past, determined by our struggles, expressed in our present condition. It would no longer conceal different possibilities depending on the power structures that exist now, in the immediate present, on conflicts of interests and projects. This would lead to the next step: The appearance of different undercurrents — minority positions at first — that appeal to us in the name of popular education to »teach tolerance« (in other words »to domesticate or avoid conflict«) and to obliterate from the language of popular educators (and in end effect their praxis, which is the actual target) their »outmoded« predilection to »educate for liberation«.

What we are talking about is the inclusion of the historical dimension in our discourse. About the inclusion of the conflictive dimension inherent in the capitalist society in which we live. About adding foundations to foundations that already exist, foundations that have been historically established by popular education in the practice of its commitment to education, with all the achievements and mistakes that have accumulated during its evolution, and all the dreams and utopian ideas that it has of a new society and new ways for human beings to relate not only to one another but also to mother nature. I would like to express this thought in the words of our revered teacher, Paolo Freire:

> »In our making and remaking of ourselves in the process of making history — as subjects and objects, persons, becoming beings of insertion in the world and not of pure adaptation to the world — we should end by having the **dream**, too, a mover of history: There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope.
>
> »Thus, I keep insisting,« — Freire adds — »ever since **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**: there is no authentic utopia apart from the tension between the denunciation of a present becoming more and more intolerable, and the 'annunciation', announcement of a future to be created, built — politically, esthetically, and ethically — by us women and men. Utopia implies this denunciation and proclamation, but it does not permit the tension between the two to die away with the production of the future previously announced. Now the erstwhile future is a new present, and a new dream experience is forged. History does not become immobilized, does not **die**. On the contrary, it goes on.
>
> »The understanding of history as **opportunity** and not **determinism**, the conception of history operative in this book, would be unintelligible without the dream, just as the deterministic conception feels uncomfortable, in its incompatibility with this understanding and therefore denies it...«[3]

> »Indeed, whenever the future is considered as a pregiven — whether this be as the pure, mechanical repetition of the present, or simply because it 'is what it has to be' — there is no room for utopia, nor therefore for the dream, the option, the decision, or expectancy in the struggle, which is the only way hope exists. There is no room for education. Only for training.«[4]

With respect to the conflict as a permanent given of this society, for which reason popular education could never be »education for tolerance«, but must keep on being »education for liberation«, I would like to share with you another paragraph from Freire's recent book, in which he states:

> »Yesterday as today, I spoke of social classes with the same independence and consciousness of being right. It may even be, however, that many of those who demanded of me in the 1970s that I constantly explicate the concept, today require the very opposite: that I retract the two dozen times I employed it, because 'there are no longer any social classes, nor therefore any class conflict.' Hence the fact that these critics now prefer, to the language of the possible, which holds fast to utopia as a possible dream, the neoliberal, 'pragmatic' discourse, according to which we must 'accommodate' to the facts as given — as if they could be given in no other way, as if we had no duty to fight, precisely because we are persons, to have them given differently.
>
> I have never labored under the misapprehension that social classes and the struggle between them could explain everything, right down to the color of the sky on a Tuesday evening. And so I have never said that the class struggle, in the modern world, has been or is 'the mover of history.' On the other hand, still today, and possibly for a long time to come, it is impossible to understand history without social classes, without their interests in collision.
>
> The class struggle is not the mover of history, but is certainly **one** of them...«[5]

> »The neoliberal discourses, with all their talk of 'modernity', do not have the power to do away with social classes and decree the nonexistence of antagonistic interests, nor do they have the power to do away with the conflicts and struggle between them. Any appearances to the contrary are to be explained by the fact that struggle is a historical category, and therefore has historicity.«[6]

In Freire's current positions, we find an illustration of what I mean when I say that rather than creating a new foundation for popular education, we should go on with the building process. Pleas for »a revision of the theories around which we were organizing reality«, however, take the opposite direction. Not only do they err with their global critique of the accomplishments of popular education hitherto. I have already commented on that aspect above. They are also wrong about how we adult educators went about the task of constructing knowledge and theory — at least until the start of the new epoch of neoliberal capitalist hegemony. We did not devise theories according to which we then interpreted reality. Rather we studied reality first — together with our educands based on their culture and their interests — and then proceeded to develop our theories so that we could put them to the crucial test in real life.

Is it not necessary that we should consider how we organize our theories on reality, that we should recognize the existence of another, different reality in those elements that do not fit our theories about them? Indeed, is not that, in itself, the reason why we develop theories about what we call reality?

Ambiguity as methodology Or the language of imprecision

Our discussion oh the principles and the »remaking« of popular education seems to be plagued by a linguistic obsession with »current trends«.

The problems and issues afflicting the majority of our Latin American countries are a repetition, an amplification, and an expansion of the long list of problems and issues that have carried over from »earlier eras«, from the days before the arrival of democratization and its processes, before the advent of the modern-day conservative and neoliberal offensive. But the issues that seem to concern us more have very little to do with everyday life in our countries. Rather than focusing on the people who are **still** excluded from society, who are **still** being oppressed and exploited, rather than asking how they go about building their systems of knowledge, communication, and learning in their daily adjustment and resistance struggle, we tend to spend our time with the so-called definition of »public agendas« (an ambiguous and intellectual concept).

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In addition to this preoccupation with »current trends«, we suffer from a strong tendency to »globalize« or »philosophize«, and thereby run the risk of losing sight of the principles that characterize popular education — its practical character, for instance, that aims to improve the conditions under which the victims of injustice are forced to live, that seeks to muster the forces capable of transforming society towards greater justice and liberty. Newly developed concepts such as »equity« (as if it were possible to speak of »equity« in a capitalistic class society like ours), or »citizenship« (which is just as ambiguous as others mentioned above) lead us to a path of confusion that constantly obliges us — at least those of us who try to maintain a firm commitment to social justice — to modify the terms with descriptive adjectives for the sake of precision so as to avoid the pitfall of changing »something so that everything stays the same« (the type of change that is nothing more than »adverbial«, as Paulo Freire puts it — mere modification without transformation). Accordingly, we find concepts like »active citizenship« or »equity with justice«, or »progressivist post-modernism«. Or »participatory democracy«. At the same time, however, we are witnessing in every corner of society how the processes of democratization have become a battlefield for violent contention over the specific contents and the forms of democracy. Variations like »democratic dictatorships«, or »limited democracies« have become very fashionable in our countries of Latin America.

Ambiguities breed new ambiguities. And not only in the theoretical context of concept design, but also in the praxis of social development and education.

In the laundered discourse that fills the pages of so many diverse publications, it seems to be an established conception that »modern« is intimately related to »democratic« and »progress« or »development«. In reality, however, just the opposite proves to be the case in what happens every day. Through »modernization« of capitalism, democracy loses in substance, depth, and breadth. Eduardo

Galeano uses the word »ninguneando« in this connection to describe a progressive process of becoming nothing — the gradual diminishing of democracy. It becomes a travesty of »democratic dictatorship«. The process can be followed very clearly in Peru and Argentina. Through neoliberal »modernization« and »globalization«, »progress« and »development« mean progress and development for society's wealthiest and most powerful members, but stagnation, regression, and underdevelopment for the members who are poorest and most excluded from society (the world's real majorities). This neoliberal form of »development« is developing our underdevelopment to a degree that would have been inconceivable only twenty years ago. And these are issues that indeed are relevant for the »subjects of society« with whom we work. For if the current »development« of capitalism means hunger and misery for three quarters of the world's population, it is the hunger and misery of those to whom we have committed ourselves in popular education. If, in the language of the majority of the population, the language that we preach in popular communication, the terms »development«, »progress«, »democracy«, or »modernization« are translated into hunger, misery, and suffering for the subjects with whom we work, they become concepts that merit our close attention. Definitely much more so than terms and phrases like »public agendas«, »citizenship«, »re-pedagogization of the social fabric in its globality«, »deconstruction« or »equity«. They are of great relevance for the popular movement to which, in my opinion, we educators belong.

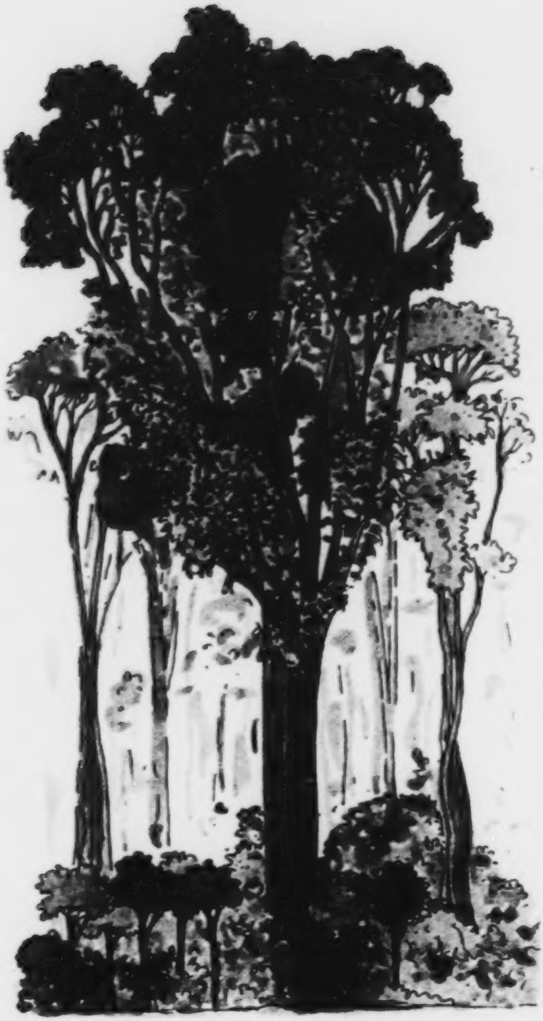
Or have we switched our allegiance? Most of us popular educators have not. It may be true that some of us have — those of us who allow ourselves to be guided by statements like the one I shall quote here: it claims that what matters is to participate »in social structures in order to modify them with the aim of reorganizing society and the processes of socialization of its various actors« (?). We have spoken of laundered language. Without question, however, ideas are also being laundered. We have been taught that »for a long time critical thought failed to comprehend the changes that capitalism was undergoing«. Does that mean that the essence of capitalism has changed, the essence that makes the desire for profit, the desire for gain the basis for the socio-economic life of human beings, the basic motivating factor of human existence, the essence that turns money into a deity, and worships money as its main religion?

Another example: In a research study on the phenomenon of popular education, a scholar — we do not know what practical experience he has as an adult educator — states that »popular education will contribute to reweave and strengthen the social fabric that has been so worn by the economic situation and militarization...« The role he assigns popular education is based on an ambiguous and multivalent concept. Within the »social fabric« (the network of relationships) of any of our Latin American societies, there are those who weave one kind of cloth, and others who weave cloth of another kind. In their interactions, wherever they meet, both sides endeavour to »unravel« the piece that does not correspond to their respective and distinct interests and needs. Moreover, the economic »situation« is always the result of conflict between different economic policies. It is determined by those who in a combination of forces succeed to impose their hegemony. The others constitute the pockets and activities of resistance. Hence, instead of speaking of »the destruction of the social fabric« which tends to be the trend in circles that use the fact-concealing language of neoliberal cultures, we should be talking about the »diverse social fabrics« woven from different and conflicting social positions. Street children, for example, are not »a destroyed segment of the social capitalist fabric«. They are an intrinsic — functional rather than dysfunctional — part of that social fabric, a logical and coherent product of that fabric, a consequence of the specific way social relations are organized.

We realize that much remains to be said in the popular education debate. There is much yet to be discussed and sorted out. There are many more aspects about which we could go into much greater detail and examine more closely to reflect on their various shades from different angles. There are still many points that remain to be dealt with and agreed upon. But we know that the circus is not yet bankrupt. Perhaps, therefore, we are talking when we ought to be silent, since discussion is not our most important task. Nevertheless, we must realize that our debate is a struggle of ideas and concepts, a struggle of an ideological and cultural nature. There is no avoiding it.

Notes

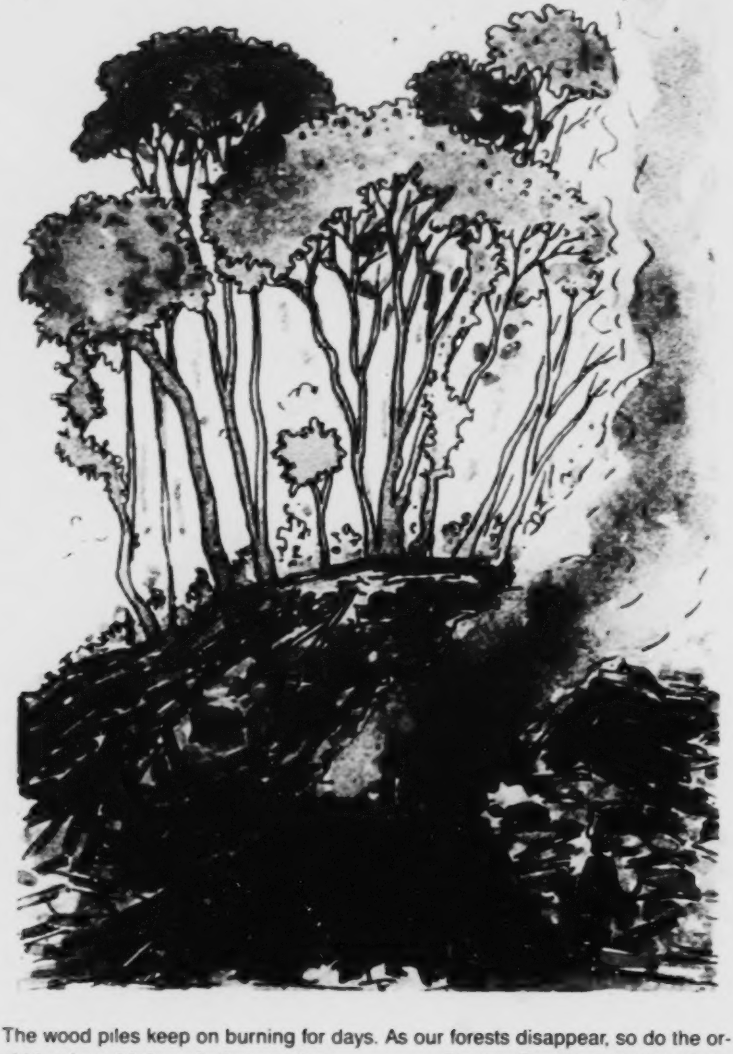
1. Freire, Paulo, Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (with notes by Ana Maria Araujo Freire and translated by Robert R. Barr), The Continuum Publishing Company, New York, NY 1994, p. 7.
2. Brandão, Carlos, Rodrigues, Educación Popular, Ed. Brasiliense, 1984.
3. Freire, Paulo, Pedagogy of Hope, p. 91.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid p. 90.
6. Ibid, p. 93.



Every day many of our forest's monuments are being chopped down and cut to pieces. Design: Zoraida and Alicia Calle

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

ECOLOGY
APPROPRIATE
FARMING METHODS



The wood piles keep on burning for days. As our forests disappear, so do the orchids, vines, birds and other species. Design: Zoraida and Alicia Calle

The following contribution is a compilation of excerpts from a thesis written by a group of students about nature reserves created and managed by peasant farmers on their land around Lake Cocha, a unique ecosystem located in the south-western corner of Colombia in the highlands of Nariño. It describes a rural initiative and experience gathered in the attempt to bring farming both for personal consumption as well as marketing into harmony with the preservation of genetic diversity. The study is a remarkably good illustration of Participatory Action Research in practice, considering how closely the rural population was involved in the collection and evaluation of data. The measures were coordinated by Zoraida Calle and financed by various Colombian universities and foundations, and the results of the study were published under the title »Diversidad Biológica y Diálogo de Saberes«. For many years, the rural groups around Lake Cocha have been the focus of assistance from the Colombian NGO »Asociación para el Desarrollo Campesino« (ADC), a long-time partner of IIZ/DVV.

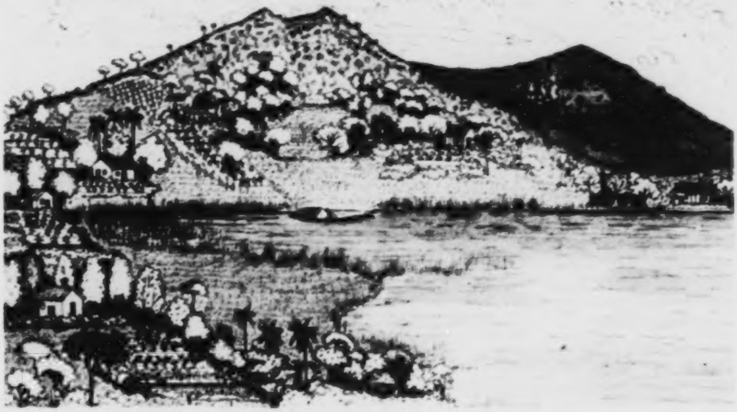
Zoraida Calle

Small farmers of La Cocha. Networking among nature reserves

The process to create a network and link the nature reserves established by the farmers of La Cocha was initiated as the result of a joint meeting between the »*Asociación para el Desarrollo Campesino*« (ADC, a rural development association) and an initiative to network nature reserves on the national level, the »*Red Nacional de Reservas de la Sociedad Civil*«, a movement that developed a dynamic of its own in 1991. It was around this time that the Duque family decided to consider converting its farm, Tunguragua, which is located on the banks of Lake Cocha, into a nature reserve, an area with potential for helping to conserve the region's natural resources. A large group of peasant families had already been involved in activities promoted by the ADC in La Cocha. Many of these families had property containing small woodlands which originally provided them with valuable timber and charcoal. Until then, from 1980 until 1991, efforts had concentrated on the practicability of the idea of nature reserves within the framework of rural reality.

As a first step, the leaders were invited to discussions organized for the purpose of reflecting on how the woodlands were being used. The number of farmers participating in those discussions grew steadily, and the group began to realize the advantages of putting the »inactive« portions of their farms to use in the sense of planned management just as they did with the rest of their property.

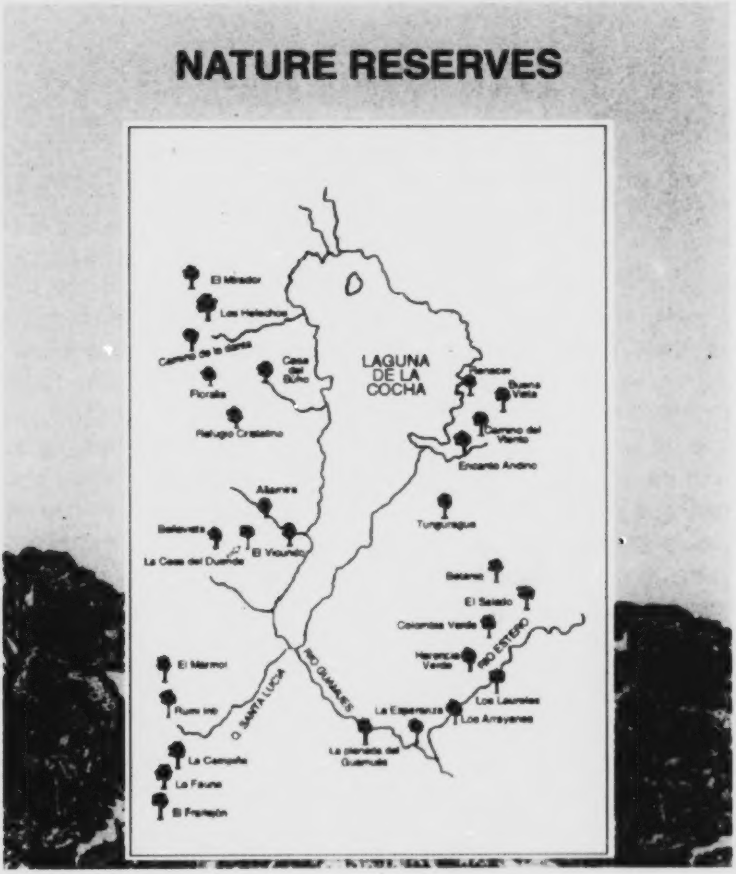
The idea caught on. The nature reserve proposal found an immediate echo among the farmers. In a way, it coincided with feelings already latent in both the farmers and the ADC advisors who were assisting them.



Initially, the idea of the nature reserves applied only to the woodlands. It was gradually amplified to include the paramos and wetlands. And in time it was felt that it should also extend to productive land. This was how the production process came to be regarded as a facet of conservation. The idea arose from concern over soil conservation. When comparing yields from former times with the soil's current yield, the farmers realized that years ago they had invested their time attending to many resources that no longer existed on many tracts of land. This realization convinced them to expand their conservation concept to include genetic resources. According to the present concept of nature reserves in La Cocha, an integral relation exists between the conservation areas that are kept intact and the remainder of the farm.

The entire process was a very spontaneous one. It was characterized by elements of environmental logic. The process of reflection which gave birth to the idea became more concrete with the creation of the La Cocha nature reserve network which lent the activities a more explicit social dimension.

Every day, more farming families are committing themselves to setting aside parts of their lands as nature reserves. At the moment, there are 38 reserves covering around 2000 hectares (4942 acres). They vary greatly in size and include woodland corridors, extended forests, both small and medium-sized wetlands, paramos below


NATURE RESERVES
El Mirador
Los Helechos
Camino de la danta
Casa del Búho
Floralia
Refugio Cristalino
LAGUNA DE LA COCHA
Renacer
Buena Vista
Camino del Viento
Encanto Andino
Altamira
Bellavista
El Vicundo
La Casa del Duende
Tungurahua
Betania
El Salado
Colombia Verde
Herencia Verde
RIO ESTERO
RIO GUAMUES
Q. SANTA LUCIA
El Mármol
Rumi
La Campiña
La Fauna
El Frailejón
La Esperanza
Los Laureles
Los Arrayanes
La planada del Guamués

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and above the woodlands, collections of genetic resources, and small production models where efforts are geared to restoring the sustainable conditions of the past.

But perhaps one of the most significant achievements of the nature reserves movement was that it opened a space for the farmers to reflect on the environmental reality of their region. The farmers began to think about the diversity of their resources, about the efficiency of cattle raising, the consumption of firewood, the social and environmental cost of making charcoal, the drainage of wetlands, the vanishing of valuable local resources like fine timber, the progressive decline of wildlife, deforestation, the depletion of fertile soils, and sedimentation in the lake. The farmers have come to connect the quality of life with the protection of the environment.

The nature reserves are beginning to become known outside the region. The farmers have advanced beyond the drafting of concepts, and are dedicating themselves to the task of ensuring the future of their reserves. Seventy percent have drawn up plans of action outlining production and conservation goals for their property for the coming year. The property owners and their families have set priorities and have formulated expectations with respect to environmental education, ecotourism, conservation, production and research on their nature reserves. Several have drawn up written environmental education programmes. Some are receiving guests on a relatively regular basis. A number of those with property in more remote areas are still awaiting their first visitors. Still others have attracted visitors from distant places who come to learn from what the farmers are doing.

Elsewhere in the country, the initiative is beginning to be regarded with respect and admiration that at another time and under other circumstances would have seemed impossible.

Elcy Corrales / Enrique Murgueitio /
Nubia Torres / Patricia Sarria

The Botina de la Cruz Family Farm

Practical efforts in the revival of local knowledge

Socio-environmental dynamics

The farm in question, which is located in the village of El Naranjal, belongs to Don Segundo Botina, Doña Marta de la Cruz and their eight children. It has been included in the study on local resources because of its relevance in analyzing the influence of charcoal making on the conservation or disappearance of genetic resources.

The selection of this family and their property was based on various factors:

- It is a rural family unit with a relatively recent connection with ADC and its work.
- Exploiting resources from the native forest has long been the family's chief source of income.
- ADC found that the property contains a highly diverse variety of plants that have become rare or extinct on other farms in the region.
- The farm is located in a sparsely populated area not accessible by land.

From discussions with Don Segundo and Doña Marta, and information provided by ADC, a number of deductions were possible about the family's subsistence strategies and how they relate to forest resources and the conservation of genetic resources. The process can be outlined as follows:

Sources of financial income	*Personal consumption*	*Interrelatedness of woodlands - family - and genetic resources (GR)*
1. Making charcoal (father).	Subsistence farming (mother, children).	High pressure, the family cooperates in making charcoal; time is scarce for GR.
2. Intervention on the part of ADC and Cooyarcocha. • Cultivation of blackberries (woman). • Cattle raising (man). • Potato farming (family).	Amplification and diversification.	Lessening of pressure on woodlands. Family works closely together; dedicates more time to GR.
3. Current situation. • Blackberry crop fails (poor management, pest damage). • Reversion to charcoal making. • Efforts with potato farming, cattle raising, trout fishing continue.	Efforts remain intense, but there is evidence of protein deficiency in the children.	Pressure returns as a result of rise in prices during the national energy crisis of 1992. The children work with their father in making charcoal. There is less time to concentrate on GR. The family would prefer to work on the farm and stop making charcoal, but there is not enough income.

The family has always used their woodlands to generate income through charcoal making. Initially, it was an occupation chiefly pursued by the father. Eventually, the entire family assisted in the work to the neglect and detriment of farming activities and genetic resources.

Intervention on the part of ADC and Coyarcocha characterizes the second phase of developments. Assistance was initially channelled into the cultivation of blackberries, and at a later stage into the acquisition of cattle. During the period in question, greater emphasis was placed on cultivating crops for personal consumption as well as for the market, and production was diversified. Potatoes began to become a staple food crop. As the family stepped up their farming and cattle raising activities, they decreased their charcoal making activities. This reduced the pressure on the forest and allowed the family to invest more time in the custody of genetic resources.

One aspect that merits mention here is the role played by Doña Marta's mother in passing on information about many of the genetic resources on the farm. She had been teaching her daughter about the seeds, and the benefits, uses, and ways to prepare the different plants. In addition, she supplied the family with a large part of the seeds to sow the land.

However, the blackberry crop became infested with diseases and pests as a result of inadequate care. Economic pressure led the family back to making charcoal, this time with the assistance of the older children. There was less time for farming and attending to the farm's resources. Because of their urgent need to procure financial resources, the family had to restrict their agricultural activities.

Evaluation of genetic resources

Don Segundo and Doña Marta conducted their own situation analysis. We visited their farm together with a small farmer from an-

Selection of fruits

Source: Geografía Pintoresca de Colombia

other region, two ADC agronomists, a livestock specialist, a veterinarian, and a sociologist. Since the group was comprised of professionals from diverse sectors as well as small farmers from different locations, the members were able to discuss the situation from different vantage points.

Tubers, and in particular potatoes, are a common crop throughout the region. ADC had established that the farm in question produced an exceptionally large variety of potatoes. The aim of the visit was to learn more about the methods used for cultivating the different plant varieties based on the family's know-how.

The following is a description of the various stages involved in the study and a number of aspects that came to light:

1. First of all, a tour of the farm was conducted to give the group the opportunity to see and discuss how it was organized and cultivated, and to make a preliminary survey of its genetic diversity.

   The farm produces a considerable variety of different species alongside the main potato crop. The garden contains a large selection of native fruits and vegetables including blackberries, cabbage, celery, sorrel, oca (a tuber), lima beans, maize, and citrus fruits. It also has a variety of medicinal plants as well as tropical fruit trees and vines, together with many garden flowers including daisies, gladiolas and chrysanthemums. In addition, the family raises chickens, guinea pigs and trout.

2. A selection was made among the species and varieties of plants cultivated on the farm. We asked Don Segundo to give us a sample of each variety. The »seeds« of 16 different plant foods were evaluated in the study.

3. We asked Don Segundo and his wife to tell us what factors they considered important for the conservation of the different species and varieties of plants on their farm. We wanted them rather than us to determine the criteria.

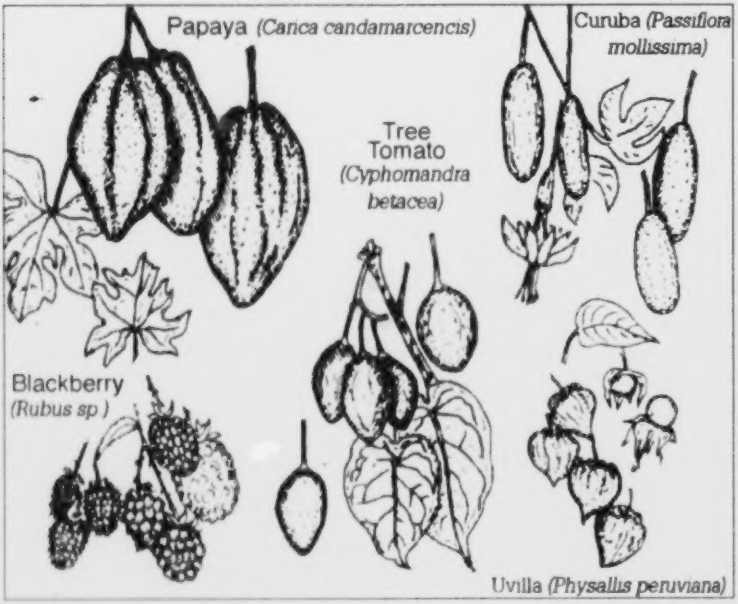
   They identified the following criteria to classify the different varieties:

   - »productivity« of the plant variety, or yield per unit of seed (in volumes of 50 to 60 kilograms)
   - the time required for sowing and germination (in weeks)
   - the length of the growing season from planting until harvest (in weeks).

4. Once the criteria were established, a system was devised to determine the position of each species or variety on a scale of importance. We worked on the floor with kernels of maize which we arranged in piles according to each criterion and variety.

   A number of interesting and noteworthy developments occurred during the process. At the outset, the visitors proposed a maximum number of points for each criterion. There were nine potato varieties on the farm. We agreed on this number as the maximum score, example given, for the variety with the highest yield. After taking the kernels of maize and applying the rule to the first varieties, Don Segundo decided to modify the system, and he proceeded to work according to his personal know-how and understanding. At one point, he placed more than nine kernels in front of one of the varieties. He explained that when he planted a load of the potato variety in question, he harvested twelve rather than nine loads. In this way we were able to establish a rule that everyone could understand and apply to judge the other varieties of potatoes as well.

The same procedure was used for the other criteria. Germination periods were narrowed down with the farmers from months


Papaya (Carica candamarcencis)
Curuba (Passiflora mollissima)
Tree Tomato (Cyphomandra betacea)
Blackberry (Rubus sp)
Uvilla (Physallis peruviana)

to fortnights, and finally to weeks. The same system was applied to measure the growing season, from planting to harvesting.

5. Once we had finished this part of the exercise, we asked Don Segundo what his choice would be if he had to limit himself to two varieties of potatoes. He indicated that he would keep the *»Red Huila«* variety, although it is an improved variety whose seed had to be purchased on the market, and because there is a high demand for it in Pasto. It is a variety that brings a good price. His second choice was *»Silvana«*, because it is a fast-growing, high-yielding and marketable variety.

   We asked Doña Marta about tuber crops (oca, for example), sorrel and root vegetables (in the celery and carrot family). She prefers the *»Chincheño«* variety of sorrel because it is softer when cooked and tastes better, and the surplus is marketable when there is a good harvest. Where sorrel is concerned, she prefers the red variety because of the yield. Yield is also her reason for planting parsnips.

6. We discussed which varieties of potatoes can be planted together and the reasons. Don Segundo told us, for example, that the *»Red Huila«* variety is not compatible with *»Red Chaucha«* or *»Tornilla«*, because the latter varieties mature at a faster rate. On the other hand, it is possible to cultivate *»Gualcalá«* potatoes alongside *»Morasurco«* potatoes because they can be harvested at the same time.

   As already mentioned at the beginning of this exercise, we only worked with the seed potatoes available on the farm at the time, but reference was also made to other varieties that are cultivated, like *»Carriza«* potatoes that can be planted together with *»Red Huila«* because they can be harvested at the same time;

and a blue variety called »*Capira*«, which has characteristics similar to the »*Colombina*« variety.

7. Before departing, we spoke with the Botina family about our exercise. Don Segundo indicated that it was helpful for him because it made him realize that he knows something, too, and that a person can take pride in being aware of what he knows.

8. After concluding the exercise on the Botino farm, we summed up the results on a flip chart, and left it on the floor. A while later, we found a group of local farmers examining the information. Our conversations with them helped us to better understand the Botina family's criteria.

   While we had proceeded on the assumption that it was rated as negative for a potato variety if it took longer for the seed potatoes to sprout, the farmers explained that the contrary was true, that it was a desirable characteristic because it allowed the farmer to plant his crops according to a plan in combination with other varieties. Farmers who know their resources and are able to manage time as a variable in order to combine varieties are in a position to create efficient productive systems in order to satisfy the family's need for both food and income.

   But the conversation also gave us an indication of how the other farmers viewed the manner in which the Botinas were managing the resources on their farm. In their opinion, the Botina farm was technologically backward and disorganized. The great diversity of resources that demonstrated strength and hope for small farmers in the eyes of the professionals was symptomatic of underdevelopment for the farmers themselves.

   This reveals the dimension of the challenge we face, not only in the revival of rapidly disappearing know-how, but also in bringing the farmers to realize the value of their own efforts.

In view of this information, we initiated discussion on the relative importance of different varieties of potatoes: which ones can be cultivated together for what reasons, and why the conservation of such genetic resources is important for family survival. In the present case, the preservation of genetic resources is a facet in the development of an ecologically less aggressive agricultural system that forms part of a conservation strategy. Alternatives must be sought at the same time to prevent forest conservation from becoming a new enemy for the region's farmers.

Methodological considerations

Aside from the aspect of time-efficiency (no more than two hours were required for the entire exercise), the participatory methods adopted for our rural evaluation proved to be an effective approach for activating local knowledge. They provided the farmer with an opportunity to appreciate the value of his know-how. In the words of Don Segundo, »it makes a person realize what he knows«.

It permits the effective and useful systematization of empirical data on what the farmers know and how they apply their knowledge. Moreover, it fosters a profitable exchange of information in language that anyone can understand.

In the course of discussion, the participants establish a system to »quantify« tendencies that lend themselves to measurement in figures that per se are irrelevant. The reason for the quantification is apparent to the participants, who are able to assimilate the information and draw conclusions.

In this way, it is possible to combine qualitative methods of investigation with quantitative methods for measuring data that are usually in the exclusive domain of the outside investigator, who, as a rule, obtains his data from rigid surveys designed according to his criteria and his methods of measurement that are frequently incomprehensible for the farmers.

The process of language construction must be stressed in this connection. It serves to establish a basis for communication. Later on, the participants can put the information into their own words. The important thing is that everyone comes away with the same information in language that he or she understands.

The process does not involve formal statistical analysis. Nevertheless, it allows the participants to assess various alternatives, identify tendencies, and establish criteria for making comparisons.

The exercise conducted in the framework of this study sheds light on the mechanisms of decision making. What was learned can become a useful tool in reaching future decisions. The information that was gathered provided the basis for dialogue on the characteristics of production and the different strategies that people employ to satisfy their families' food needs throughout the year. It follows that resource management of different plant species and varieties presupposes the ability to manage know-how regarding crop cycles, the cycles of agriculture and the different characteristics of the different plant varieties.

»*Renacer*« Nature Reserve

The farm in question, which is now the »*Renacer*« Nature Reserve, belongs to the Burgos Buesaquillo family. It encompasses 17 hectares (42 acres). The parents arrived at the village of Santa Teresita from Córdoba (Nariño). At first they earned their living by gathering wood and producing charcoal. The property at the time was characterized by degraded woodland and depleted soil.

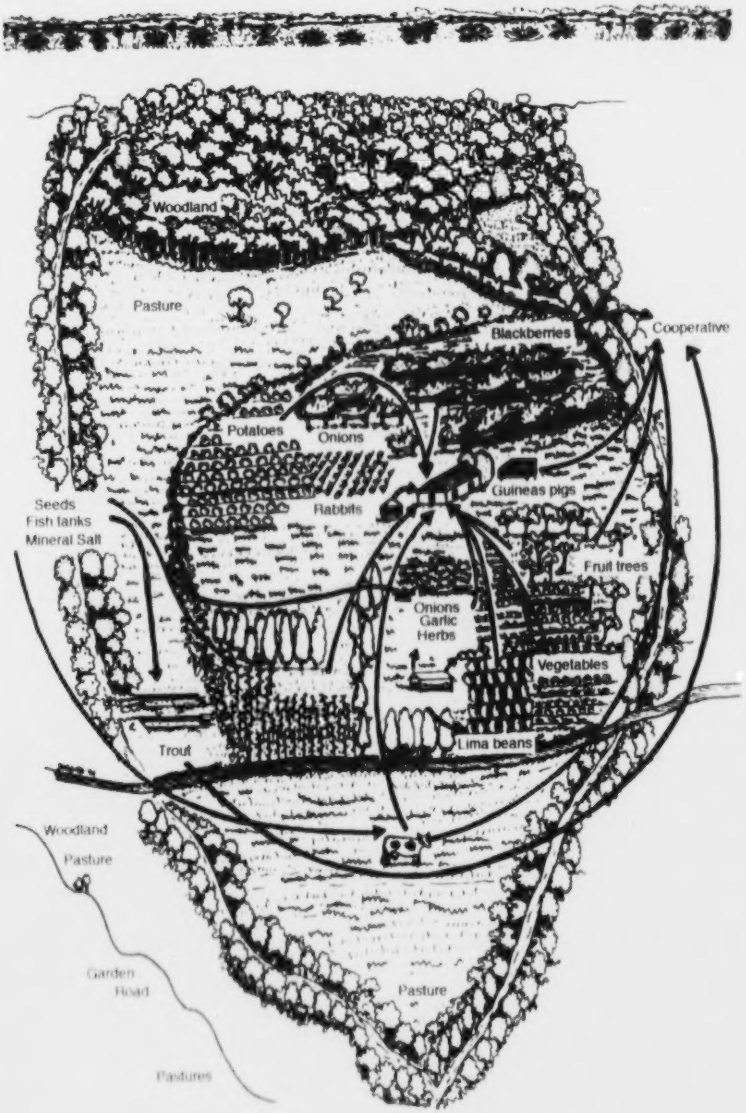
It was subdivided, according to use, as follows: Grazing land accounted for 9 hectares. Crops were cultivated on 3.75 hectares. There were 3.5 hectares of woodland, 1 hectare of stubble field, and 0.25 hectare of improved pasture crops.

Types of farming

The farm is largely devoted to dairying, which is also the family's chief source of income. In addition, the family raises guinea pigs, rabbits, chickens and sheep, and cultivates blackberries, potatoes, beans, onions, herbs and fruit trees.

Agricultural production

Organic fertilizers are used for all crops except the potato crop, for which »10-30-10« or »triple 15« fertilizers are used (Translators note: Fertilizers are numbered according to the proportion of nitrogen, phosphate, and potassium, respectively. Thus a 10-30-10 fertilizer contains 10% nitrogen, 30% phosphate, and 10% potassium.) Organic fertilizers are obtained from compost piles located at the end of the cultivated plots on which manure from the guinea pigs is mixed with discarded weeds. The piles are turned every month,


Woodland
Pasture
Blackberries
Cooperative
Potatoes
Onions
Guineas pigs
Seeds
Fish tanks
Mineral Salt
Rabbits
Fruit trees
Onions
Garlic
Herbs
Vegetables
Lima beans
Trout
Woodland
Pasture
Garden
Road
Pasture
Pastures

and in three months the compost is ready to use. Humus from earthworms obtained from guinea pig, rabbit, cattle or horse manure is also used. Horse manure brings the best results in fostering the reproduction of earthworms and the creation of humus. Cow manure produces less earthworms, but more humus. Earthworms and humus production on the basis of guinea pig manure is slow.

Crops are sowed in rows that follow the slope of the land. The farmers help one another in their farming chores. In general, chemical herbicides are only applied to potatoes. The fungicide *»Manzate«* and the insecticide *»Roxion«* are used. But in some instances, *Manzate* is also used to control onion blight. Agrochemicals are not used for any of the other crops.

The tilled land is divided into small plots surrounded by pasture, herbs and curuba, a type of passion fruit, interspersed with apple and plum trees[1].

Present arrangements

1. Onions are grown together with camomile. Small onions are planted along the border of part of the crop; other parts are bordered by camomile, *»paico«*[2], turnips, *»cidron«*[3], *curuba* and dill
2. Plots of garlic are mixed with pasture crops
3. Maize, beans
4. Potatoes and lima beans; potatoes are planted on the higher parts of the plots, and the lima beans on the lower ones at different times
5. Lima beans, maize bordered by *»Reina Claudia«* plum trees
6. Potatoes, maize and plums
7. Blackberries, maize, lima beans and poa grass
8. Plots of strawberries, lettuce, carrots, cabbage, apple trees, and blackberries in lateral rows

9. Blackberries alone: 700 plants on a steep incline
10. Potatoes bordered by cabbage.

Poultry and livestock production

Guinea pigs: Guinea pigs are raised for personal consumption and the market. They are fed with Brazil grass, rye grass, *poa* grass, kitchen scraps and carrots. When fodder grasses are in short supply, other plants are used (*»chilca blanca«*[4], *»zagrapanga«*[5]). The animals are kept in wooden hutches built in two levels. The hutches, which are cleaned twice weekly, have a system of channels for collecting urine as liquid fertilizer. Various breeds are raised including *»Picudo«*, *»Churoso«*, *»Colchoso«*, and a few others that have been cross-bred with Peruvian strains.

Rabbits: Approximately 10 *Criollo* rabbits are kept for personal consumption. They are fed on the same fodder as the guinea pigs in addition to cabbage, lettuce, carrots and Swiss chard.

***Criollo* chickens:** There are twenty chickens of various varieties including: *»Copetona«*, *»Carcuta«*, (a breed with a feathered face), *»Carcetera«* (with feathered legs), *Guata* (a short-legged variety), *Carioca* or Peruvian, *Chilpa* and »high-grade« for incubation. The 20 chickens consume a kilogram of maize daily.

Cows: There are eleven Holsteins, each of which produces between seven to eight litres of milk per day. They are fed on fodder grasses and skins of potatoes cooked with salt. The animals are tied for grazing. They are kept on about 1.8 ha of pasture for 8 days, after which the pastureland is left to grow for three to four weeks.

Trout: There is a pond of 10 x 5 metres. The trout are fed on concentrates and worms.

Sheep: There are three *Criollo* sheep that are kept tied to posts. They are sheared twice a year and produce 1.5 pounds of fleece per shearing.

Four products are produced for the market, milk, blackberries, guinea pigs and potatoes, in their order of importance.

Notes

1. The plum trees are a common domestic variety of *Prunus Domestica* locally known as »*Reina Claudia*«.
2. »*Paico*« is a medicinal herb scientifically known as *Chenopodium Ambrosoides*. It is used as a remedy against parasites, particularly in children.
3. »*Cidron*«, scientifically known as *Lippia Citrodoro* is a medicinal plant also used as an herbal tea.
4. »*Chilca blanca*« is a shrub used as a living fence. Its scientific name is *Baccharis Buddlejoide*.
5. »*Zagrapanga*« is an ornamental plant with a variety of uses. Cheese is wrapped in the leaves which are also used for sealing the mouths of potato and onion sacks. Its scientific name is *Anthrium Sp*.

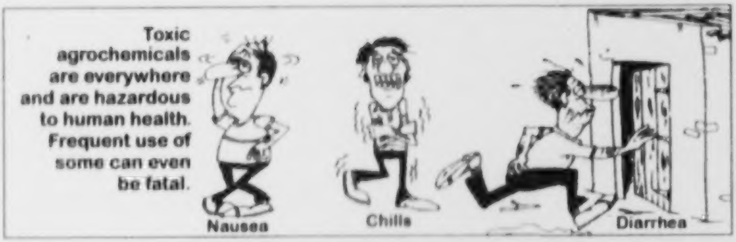
The Argentine Centre of Studies on Appropriate Technology CETAAR, of which the author is a member, is an institution dedicated to promoting activities to improve human health and the environment. The following interview, which appeared in the May 1995 issue of the Newsletter »Acción«, published by the Instituto de Cultura Popular INCUPO, an NGO operating in the north of Argentina, focuses on the ubiquitous dangers of pesticides and poisons in everyday life.

Poison in the home

Interview with Javier Souza Casadinho

Acción: People use poisons and pesticides for farming and in the home. How does this effect our health?

Javier: It implies a very great risk. The fact is that pesticides and poisons are all around us. We use them in the household to combat flies, mosquitoes, ants, and bugs. And in the area of agriculture, we live with large numbers of toxic agrochemicals used for killing


Toxic agrochemicals are everywhere and are hazardous to human health. Frequent use of some can even be fatal.

weeds, fungus, and insects. I say we »live with them«, because we store them in the same place where we keep our foods, or we use them very close to our homes. In supermarkets they are sold alongside noodles or rice. Sometimes we even use containers from poisons to carry water, to store food or for some other household purpose. And all this is extremely detrimental to our health. Poisons and pesticides are hazardous, and they are everywhere.

Acción: But sometimes it isn't possible to achieve a good yield without pesticides. Rural workers know the danger, but they would lose their jobs if they were to refuse to use them. The experts recommend them. Where does the responsibility lie for the use of toxic agrochemicals?

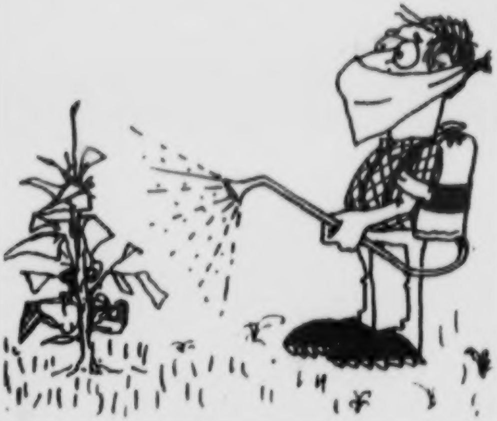
Javier: So many of us are responsible. Take producers, for instance. In times of declining agricultural productivity, producers try to save their crops and grow the kind of products for the market that are attractive in appearance. This is particularly true as far as fruits and vegetables go. More value is placed on the appearance than on the nutritional content. In response to the situation, farmers use more toxic agrochemicals than they need to.

The trend is also encouraged by the people who sell agrochemicals. They visit the farms, sell their products on an instalment basis, and claim to offer the »latest developments«, »the best products«. And if a product is available, and farmers think their crops might be in danger, they don't hesitate to buy and use chemicals even though the need is not always there.

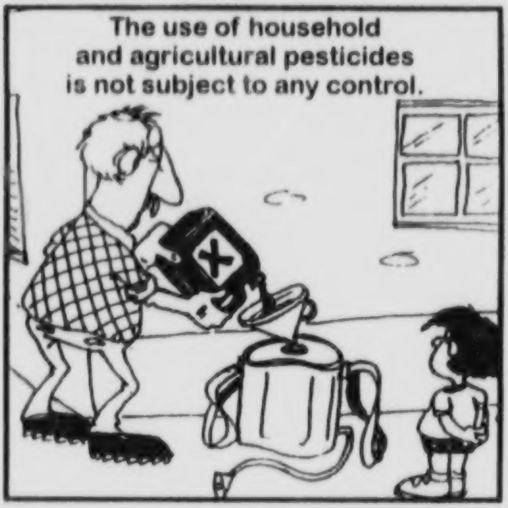
Then there are the rural workers. Generally they know the hazards of such products, but they have to use them because it is their job.

And they do so without taking sufficient precautions to protect themselves. Everybody knows how easy it is to replace a worker who would refuse to use pesticides, because there are scores of people without work who would be willing to apply poisons and risk their health for the sake of a job.

A worker who refuses to apply pesticides where not even the minimum precautions are taken for his safety, risks his job. Besides, he knows that there are plenty of unemployed people who would do the work even at the expense of their health.



We **consumers** are another link in the chain. Why? Because we prefer to buy products that are attractive


The use of household and agricultural pesticides is not subject to any control.

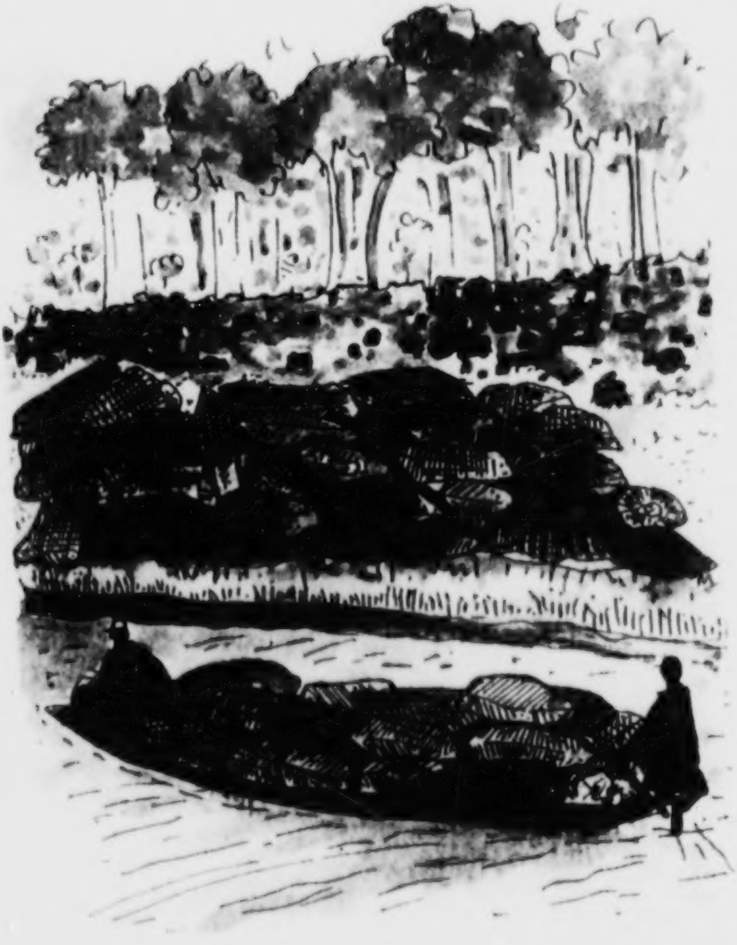
and free from any blemishes or insect marks — produce that stands out. And that induces the producer o use lots of pesticides so that his produce is completely free, for instance, of any signs of insect damage.

Then there are the **professional experts**. Agronomers very often recommend using large quantities of toxic agrochemicals without taking the costs of production into account, and what is more, they do so regardless of whether or not such chemicals are really necessary.

And there is also the **government**. Or rather the conspicuous absence of its influence. Statutory regulations are outdated. Legislation does not keep pace with the introduction of new pesticides on the market. Consequently, there are many pesticides that are not subject to any regulation, or existing regulations are becoming progressively permissive. We know that there are pesticides that are still being used even though they have been prohibited. And that other pesticides are being used here in our country although their use is prohibited in others. The use of household and agricultural agrochemicals is not subject to any control whatever.

A more sensible approach would be to use less toxic pesticides in correct amounts, and not to follow the practice customary here of using more when in doubt. In addition, more precaution should also be taken when applying pesticides. Protective face masks should be used and attention should be given to correct application in terms of procedure, frequency, and required amounts. And also to the handling and storage of pesticides: they should be kept out of the reach of children, and residues should be disposed of correctly.

In other words, several precautionary measures can be taken to diminish the risks, and they are steps that can be taken right now. But we must also think in terms of the future, and adopt an ecological approach to agricultural management. Such an approach means using natural resources, improving the level of nutrients in the soil, and cultivating a variety of species in the sense of biodiversity. Animal husbandry should also be incorporated into the concept. The idea is to gradually eliminate the use of pesticides. And further, to try and change the methods of production and aim for a more integrated system of agriculture based on diversity in the use of resources.



The sacks of charcoal that leave La Cocha and go to the cities do not mean prosperity for the rural population. Making charcoal is a strenuous job and involves everyone in the family. It leaves little time for farming, education or recreation. Meagre earnings force charcoal-makers deeper and deeper into debt. They became the slaves of forest destruction. Design: Zoraida and Alicia Calle

In the June issue of the Agro-Ecological Movement of Chile (Movimiento Agroecológico Chileno MACH) we found two contributions which, in our opinion, indicate the right direction for adult education to take in its work with small-scale farmers. Scarlett Mathieu Loguercio discusses techniques for restoring fertility to depleted mountainous soil. Rolando Bunch explains the agricultural advantages that result from the systematic use of green manure. It is a technique that admittedly requires patience and perseverance, but especially for small farmers of limited means, it offers a feasible alternative to costly chemical fertilizers.

Scarlett Mathieu Loguercio

Productive terracing in Coelemu

A survival strategy

In June 1995, CEDELCOOP conducted a course in Cauquenes, VII Región, on »An Ecological Approach to Soil Management«. The participants were given the opportunity to become acquainted with a rural project in the village of Coelemu on revitalization of the soil.

We visited a farm on two hectares of land with class VI soil (due to the steep grade of the land). The owner cultivates a variety of crops on terraces covering a surface area of 0.5 hectares.

Traditionally, cultivation of the soil there follows a six-year rotation system. Wheat is alternated with beans, followed by 4 years of natural pasture.

Because of the property size, it has become progressively difficult to abide by the long rotation schedule, with the result that the already eroded soil is being subjected to increasing pressure. »Horizonte A« no longer exists in practice, and eroded plots of all sizes are a characteristic feature of the landscape.

Plantation forestry is spreading, and small farming families have been forced to develop complex strategies for survival on their land.

One of the challenges they have faced is the construction of terraces with nothing but their own manpower so that they can farm their mountainous land, which in places has an incline of more than 45 degrees. It is no easy task to terrace the side of a hill with only a hoe and shovel, and consequently, it has taken the family five years to prepare the half a hectare that they cultivate at present.

For this and other reasons, perhaps, the project is progressing at a pace which seems exasperatingly slow to the impatient mind of an ecologist. During five years of efforts in the region, CEDELCOOP has promoted the ecological management of the soil on 60 small farms, 15 of which are located in the territory around Coelemu. The farm we visited is the most successful of these.

Another serious limitation arises from the need to construct some type of system to irrigate the terraces. Water as a resource is

scarce. It is available in rivers at the foot of the mountains, but to transport it above the terraces, the farmers need pumps that they must finance themselves. The family we visited owns such a pump, and is able to store water in a tank that they use for wine during part of the year. They use a drip irrigation system to optimize the resource.

What do they produce on the terraces that were so difficult for them to build? They started by planting various fruit trees, including apple, pear, and peach trees. The ones they planted five years ago are beginning to produce fruit for the market. In the spaces between the trees, they cultivate a variety of garden vegetables for their personal consumption and the market. In response to local demand, they produce lettuce, tomatoes, cabbage, peas, maize, lima beans, garlic, chilli peppers, etc. Artichokes, with their semi-perennial characteristics, helped to establish the first terraces. The family is starting to cultivate flowers, which are scarce on the local market, and in high demand.

It may seem incredible that all this can grow on soil that is virtually infertile.

But it does, and what makes it possible are the massive applications of organic matter to enrich the soil — green manure, compost, stubble, guano (brought in from places where it is more abundant) — plus measures to maintain the fertility once it is achieved, like a permanent crop cover or stubble to keep the soil from being washed away by the rain.

Infiltration has improved significantly. Irrigation can be postponed until much later in the season, and rainwater runoff is clearer. Crop diversity and natural nutrients have made it possible to reduce the applications of agrochemicals recommended by field sanitation programmes in the region by 90 percent or more. Pests and plant diseases are no longer calamities, but minor setbacks with easy and inexpensive solutions.

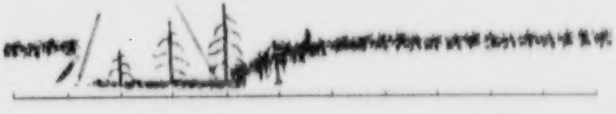
Biodiversity is also the solution to the seasonal character of production (and income). During the difficult growing season, a small greenhouse helps to complement production.

The work of the agronomists has profited from the experience of the small farmers. **They have learned that trees should be kept short so as not to interfere with the development of the mixed crops; that a good method for keeping the terraces from eroding is to border them with pasture grasses; that the width of the terraces should be determined according to the ability to reach their inner edge with the hoe.** In other words, when it comes to practice, there is a human aspect to technology and its logic must be based on reality. The conviction of the producer and a dynamic approach — and not an avalanche of external resources — are the only guarantees for lasting effects and progress in programmes geared to the recovery and conservation of soil and water.

In 1987, Rolando Bunch wrote an article under the following title in an effort to give an overview of what was known at the time on the subject of green manure and its relevance for small-scale farmers in Central America. Six years later, when he wrote the present article, which was published in the Chilian Adult Education Journal MACH (June 1995), he commented that meanwhile it would take a book to discuss everything known on the subject; that in the six years since his first article appeared, the topic of green manure and its uses for small-scale farmers had been added to the agenda of some fifty institutions in Central America and Mexico; moreover, that in South America, Africa, and Asia there were more than a hundred institutions working with the technology in question. In his article, which summarizes the most important aspects of the topic, Bunch emphasizes recent findings in the area, highlighting information that is of particular significance for programmes beginning to work with green manure, or considering its possibilities.

Rolando Bunch

The use of green manure by small-scale farmers: What we have learned to date



Rotation cropping — beans — maize

What is »green manure«?

The term »green manure« traditionally refers to a group of plants, mainly but not exclusively legumes, that are ploughed back into the earth at the flowering stage to fertilize the soil. For small farmers in Latin America, however, who very often have priorities that differ from those in temperate regions, and who frequently do not have access to tractors with ploughs, »green manure« has a large variety of other uses. The plants in question normally are not applied to the soil while they are still green, and the farmers often do not plough them under as they do with other types of manure.

Nevertheless, we will continue to employ the term in the present article to refer to a group of plants, largely but not exclusively legumes, that farmers use for a wide range of purposes, one of which is the fertilization and improvement of the soil. They are usually applied to the surface of the soil long after the flowering stage.

Advantages and disadvantages of »green manure« for small farmers

There are an incredible number of proven advantages in the use of green manure. The first eight that are mentioned are applicable to virtually all types of green manure while the last two only apply to some:

1. It is possible in one application of green manure to add up to 50 tons of organic matter (fresh weight) to each hectare of cropland. The added organic matter has many positive effects on the soil. It improves the water-retention capacity, nutrient content, nutrient balance, consistency, and pH value of the soil.

2. Organic matter also adds large quantities of nitrogen (N) to the soil. Although *Lupinus mutabilis* (an Andean variety of lupine) can fix up to 400 kg of nitrogen per ha, it is more common to find pulse crops such as *Mucuna pruriens* (a variety of velvet beans) and *Canavalia* (jack beans). Despite the high level of volatility (which can reach 40% or more when the green manure crop is not ploughed into the soil), farmers can use such crops to enrich their cropland with quantities of nitrogen that would cost more than US$ 70 per hectare in the form of chemical fertilizers, not including the cost for transportion and application.

   The use of organic matter and nitrogen has significantly increased the fertility of the soil in a number of countries. Small farmers have been able to double their yield of maize in many cases after two or three years, and in scientific experiments it was possible to triple the traditional yield by planting lupines together with potatoes. Accordingly, programmes from India to Brazil, and many in Central America as well, have come to speak of soil »recovery« or »restoration«.

3. Organic matter and nitrogen are applied to the soil without any transportation expense. An effective distribution of green manure crops can be produced on the cropland itself. This means that isolated farmers whose land is located far from towns or roads can compete perfectly well with farmers who have more resources at their disposal because they live closer to the centres where they are commercially available.

4. Green manure does not require any financial investment once the farmer has acquired the amount of seed he needs for his first crop.

5. Green manure crops can also significantly reduce time and cost investments in weed control, particularly through mulch-

ing. This is an especially important way to discourage weed growth near the boundaries of tilled plots where weeds often become a limiting factor for small producers.

6. Accordingly, besides reducing the need for chemical fertilizers, such crops can decrease, and in most cases eliminate, the need for herbicides. Occasionally, they can also reduce the need for other chemical investments. Velvet beans, for example, have been found to control nematodes, while *Crotalaria ochroleuca* (sun hemp) helps to control pests that affect crops during storage.

7. The coverage provided by green manure crops can be an exceptionally important factor in the conservation of soil. Generally speaking, the value of cover crops, particularly in the tropics, has been seriously underrated. Careful studies in the northern part of Honduras have demonstrated that farmers in areas with more than 2.000 mm of precipitation who sow maize on slopes with an incline of 35% have been increasing the fertility of their soil over the years without any kind of physical soil conservation measures simply by keeping the soil covered ten months out of the year with legumes. Many programmes are abandoning the use of stone embankments and terraces in favour of improved coverage.

8. It has been demonstrated through experience gathered by thousands of farmers in southern parts of Brazil, in Mexico, and in northern parts of Honduras, even in cases where the soil was depleted, that after four to five years of concentrated applications of organic matter, farmers can still retain high levels of productivity with systems that do not require specific soil-preparation measures. Small-scale farmers of northern Honduras have maintained maize yields of three tons per hectare year after year without using chemical fertilizers and without any type of crop rotation. In Brazil, where crop rotation and chemi-

cal fertilizers were used in combination with legumes, seven to eight tons of maize per hectare were harvested year after year, and the expense of ploughing the land was spared.

These facts open up entirely new perspectives for small farmers in the area of efficiency and competitiveness. Weeding and ploughing have always been two of the farmer's hardest jobs, and farmers with sufficient economic resources to mechanize their work have always had a significant advantage. In view of the potential for green manure not only to facilitate those tasks, but also to substantially eliminate them, its use can enable small farmers, and farmers without resources, to compete very well with farmers in a better financial situation. In an era of neoliberalism and free commerce, this fact can be the salvation of farmers with less capital.

9. Green manure can play a significant role in changing certain farming practices that have had a damaging effect on the envi-

ronment. Considering that green manure crops improve the fertility of the soil and help to control weeds, they can prove to be a very effective method for putting a stop to migratory farming, or »slash-and-burn« techniques. In a very concrete way, they can also lead to a greater appreciation of the value of organic matter.

10. Green manure crops can also provide food for human and animal consumption, although this somewhat decreases their soil-enriching value.

The selection of plants to use and promote as green manure should take into consideration each of the advantages cited above. The influence of green manure crops on the soil is not likely to suffice as an argument for farmers to use them. Factors which are more apt to motivate farmers to try them are the food potential they offer their families, the ability they have to control weeds, or the prospect of not having to plough the land. When this is the case, green manure crops ought to be promoted on the basis of the later factors, rather than on the basis of soil productivity and feasibility.

In spite of all the foregoing advantages, it is still rather uncommon for small farmers to grow green manure crops. Certainly it is not as uncommon as it was thought to be a number of years ago. There are many thousands of farmers in Central America who are growing them already, and the trend to try them is picking up spontaneously. Nevertheless, generally speaking, it still is fairly uncommon. What are the reasons for this?

Disadvantages

1. Farmers are not likely to plant green manure crops if they can produce a market crop or food for their own consumption on the

same piece of land without incurring extra costs. Traditional green manure systems imported from countries of the North ignore this fact, which probably explains the tendency in past years for farmers to reject such systems.

2. It takes a number of years for the soil to improve through the use of green manure. This means that success is not immediately noticeable. Generally, the soil does not begin to improve until after the first application. Consequently, farmers do not observe any concrete results until after they plant the second crop on land where they first grew a green manure crop. Delayed results, which are hard to believe anyhow, tend to complicate the decision to adopt green manure technology. For this reason as well, it is preferable in most cases to cite factors other than the fertility of the soil when promoting green manure technology.

   In cases where farmers are not aware of the value of organic matter in general (a situation which is very common in Central America), we often start with experimental applications of animal manure during the first year to motivate them and make them conscious of the value of the organic matter which they are learning to produce themselves.

3. Frequently, green manure crops must continue to grow until they form a cover of dead plant material (or mulch) during the dry season. Grazing animals, the practice of burning, or intense heat may prevent the cover from lasting very long during that period.

4. Severe drought, depleted soil, extreme pH imbalance, or serious drainage problems, all of which are fairly common among poorer farmers, affect the production of green manure the same as they do other crops (although to a lesser degree), reducing their impact. Little by little we are learning how to over-

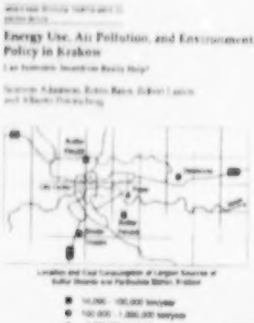
come those problems (we have recently learned, for example, that *Desmodium triflorum* grows very well in areas of Belize where the soil has a pH of less than 4.0). Such alternatives, however, often produce less plant biomass and nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Moreover, difficult growing conditions tend to restrict the space for cultivating green manure crops.

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

INFORMAL SECTOR:
SKILLS
CONTINUING EDUCATION

The World Bank has published some new Papers which might be of interest to our readers.

Global Climate Change: Economic and Policy Issues



Energy Use, Air Pollution, and Environmental Policy in Krakow

Technologies Related to Participatory Forestry in Tropical and Subtropical Countries

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Are women and men equally represented in the informal sector? Do women have the same opportunities as men, or do they face greater problems and difficulties on account of their gender? These questions are addressed in the following article. It is an abridged extract of chapters from a larger report of a study carried out between April 1992 and June 1993 in Nairobi. The study was supported by a grant from the Organization of Social Science Research in Eastern Africa, OSSREA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Augustine M. Karugu and James E. Otiende are working at Kenyatta University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundations, P.O. Box 43844, Nairobi, Kenya.

Augustine M. Karugu / James E. Otiende

Women's and men's informal sector enterprises in Nairobi, Kenya

One of the major expectations among most Kenyans of African origin on attainment of independence in 1963 was that they would secure employment and in that way have regular incomes. Securing permanent employment, to use Kenya's political jargon, indicated that one had started enjoying the fruits of independence.

The Africanisation policies pursued by the independent Kenyan Government helped in the fulfilment of these expectations, especially by creating positions in the public sector. These measures were, however, short-lived and in any case inadequate, in the sense that after Africanisation was achieved the country had to look for alternative and permanent ways of creating employment.

In the 1970's, and increasingly in the 1980's, it began to dawn on most people that employment opportunities in the public sector were limited; people had to look elsewhere to earn a living. The emergence of informal sector entrepreneurs popularly known in Kenya as *jua kali*, may be traced to the decline of employment opportunities in the public sector. Initially the *jua kali* sector was largely ignored by both the government and the general public. Today, however, the sector is widely recognized; it is seen as offering the highest potential for employment creation.

It is for this reason that in recent years the sector has attracted the attention of researchers and development planners. In this respect we join other researchers in an attempt to understand, unravel the nature of, and identify the driving forces behind this fast growing sector of Kenya's economy.

Statement of the problem

The 1972 International Labour Organization (ILO) Mission report on Kenya sensitized the country to the important role of the informal sector in alleviating the unemployment problem. Before the ILO report, the informal sector was largely ignored and received very little official recognition. After the mission's visit, however, there was a noticeable shift in official policy; financial allocations to the informal sector, for example, were made in an attempt to promote it.

Equally, researchers began to show interest in issues concerning the informal sector. It thus widely agreed that the informal sector had great potential for employment creation (see table 1).

Table 1
Informal sector employment

Activity	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*
Manufacturing	15,207	17,016	17,205	18,190	25,917	28,783
Construction	154	157	133	3	—	—
Wholesale retail and restaurants	73,527	80,037	84,693	86,303	111,607	123,956
Transport and communications	1,029	995	1,049	1,661	2,235	2,483
Community social and personal services	13,862	15,702	18,498	16,975	18,142	20,148
Total	103,869	113,937	121,577	123,150	157,903	175,370

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Survey on the Informal Sector.

Despite its accepted contribution to the employment and the growth of the economy as a whole, the informal sector is still riddled with a host of problems. The most commonly cited problems affecting informal sector entrepreneurs include:

- lack of credit facilities
- inadequate education, managerial skills and training
- inadequate supply of raw materials
- unfair competition from large established firms
- lack of secure premises for operations
- heavy taxes and licence fees, and,
- general harassment of entrepreneurs, especially in urban areas, by the authorities.

These problems have been identified and documented in various studies and reports. What remains unclear, however, is whether the experiences and impact of these problems and others among entrepreneurs cut across gender lines.

Objectives of the study

The study had two main objectives:

- to document and categorize the nature, types and composition of informal sector activities in Nairobi

- to identify determinants of informal sector activities/occupations among women and men in Nairobi so as to establish any differences that might exist, differences which could be attributed to gender.

Justfication of the study

One of the justifications for studying the informal sector in Kenya is that it accounts for a sizeable portion of the economy. Indeed it appears to be the only hope and refuge for the large numbers of unemployed young people who cannot find any openings in the already saturated public service and stagnant formal sectors.

Another reason for studying the informal sector is that it draws our attention to the condition of women workers. In Kenya, women workers account for 32% of those employed in the informal sector. A study of the informal sector raises many issues such as those of earning differentials, education and skills differentials between women and men.

Methodology

The proposal for this study was presented and discussed at a workshop held at Kenya Commercial Bank Training Institute, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya from 26 to 27 March, 1992. Several suggestions to sharpen and strengthen the proposal were made at the workshop. These were duly incorporated in the study, especially in refocusing the research problem and preparing research instruments.

(a) Data collection

The main research instrument used in the study was a questionnaire which was supplemented with participant observation interviews. A draft questionnaire was administered to a small group of informal sector entrepreneurs (*jua kali* artisans) at Gikomba area of Nairobi. The responses from the pilot survey formed the basis of the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered to *jua kali* artisans at their premises by both researchers and their assistants. The completion of the questionnaire was followed by an interview. The gist of the interview was sparked by issues raised in the questionnaire or simply by activities which drew the attention of the researchers during their visits.

The questionnaire was administered to as many *jua kali* artisans as could be found in a particular area and who were willing to participate in the study. It was, however, restricted to informal sector entrepreneurs engaged in manufacturing, trading and service activities. Data collection took place between April, 1992 and June, 1993. In all, a total of 37 *jua kali* artisans from Nairobi participated in the study.

(b) Analysis procedures

The responses to the questionnaire were coded and categorized in terms of informal sector activity and gender of individual entrepreneur. The data was then computed using simple percentages and frequency tables.

Presentation and analysis of data

(a) Age of entrepreneurs

There were 37 respondents: 19 women and 18 men. The two sexes were therefore evenly balanced. The respondents were drawn from different markets in Nairobi: Jericho, Githurai, Kahawa, Gikomba and Kamakunji; 54% of the respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35 years (see table 2).

Table 2

Age differentiation of entrepreneurs in Nairobi

	Female	*Male*
Under 20 years	02	00
21 - 25 years	06	05
26 - 35 years	10	10
36 - 45 years	01	03
> 46 years	00	00
Total	19	18

This is the most productive, innovative and energetic group in any population. It would thus appear that faced with unemployment in the formal sector many cannot afford to stay idle at this age, since it is when they marry and set up their own families. The informal sector therefore would be an attractive alternative for this age group to waiting for employment in the formal sector, which may never materialize.

(b) Formal education of entrepreneurs

64.8% of the respondents had gone beyond primary education: seven women and six men had received primary education; 11 women and 11 men had had access to post-primary education; and two had no formal education. Both women and men in the informal sector in Nairobi have therefore received primary and post-primary education; almost none have had no formal education. The majority of both women and men in the informal sector have received post-primary education: 59.4% of the total number of respondents.

This would suggest that informal sector activities attract people with more than primary education. It would also appear that people with primary level education do not immediately seek jobs in the informal sector. This reflects the trend in other sectors that job seekers tend to acquire more education than primary education before starting to look for employment.

This is an interesting finding in the sense that the informal sector has in the past been associated with illiterate or semi-illiterate persons. This trend would therefore show that as it becomes increasingly difficult to secure employment in the formal sector, a lot of educated persons will inevitably become attracted to the informal sector.

(c) Categories of enterprises

The industries were divided into three categories: metalwork, textiles and hairdressing. However, it was found that the entrepreneurs at some premises combined their activities: for example, they would be involved in metalwork (manufacturing) as well as textiles (trading) and sales of both at the same premises.

Manufacturing involved making of windows, metal boxes, *jikos* (cooking stoves) and other household items. Textiles involved tailoring and selling secondhand clothes. Finally, services were not well defined: they were intertwined. Entrepreneurs who combined manufacturing, trading and provision of services appeared to do better financially than those engaged in one activity only.

The general observation was that more men than women are involved in manufacturing, especially metalwork. Indeed, blacksmithing has traditionally been associated with men; only a few girls are trying to enter metalwork. Women tend to buy already made metal items rather than manufacture them. It is a cultural barrier which has yet to be surmounted.

At the same time more women than men are involved in services, particularly hairdressing. The beauty care industry appears more attractive to women than men. In general, girls are introduced to hair care activities earlier than boys. It follows that girls enter beauty care easily because they already know something about it from their homes. Hairdressing for women has become a lucrative industry, and girls have ready mentors and models.

(d) Age of enterprises in relation to gender

Table 3
Age of enterprise vis-à-vis gender in Nairobi

	Female	*Male*
Up to 3 years	11	07
4 - 10 years	07	09
> 11 years	01	02
Total	19	18

The female enterprises are relatively young in comparison with those of men: 50% of the female-run enterprises were three years old or less while 50% of male-run enterprises were more than four years old (table 3). The gender difference here could perhaps be explained by the many interruptions that female enterprises are subjected to. Female enterprises would appear temporary in the sense that they are likely to be interrupted by marriage, change of location, upbringing of children and lack of finance; women tend to be off-and-on in the *jua kali* sector.

Although lack of finance affects both men and women, women would appear to be hardest hit. There is a need to enquire further how family problems, stability of marriage and collaboration between husband and wife, affect women's enterprises, as opposed to those run by men.

(e) Education for entrepreneurship

Table 4
Background training of entrepreneurs in Nairobi

	Female	*Male*
Had some training	12	17
No training	07	01
Total	19	18

Most of the entrepreneurs have some form of training: 94% of the men had some form of training as compared to 63% of the women (table 4). The training received was largely on-the-job through apprenticeship. Therefore, it did not really require formal education. While there is gender disparity in formal education it is still unclear why there should be gender disparity between women and men in training in the informal sector.

This could perhaps be explained by the fact that in the industries where women dominate, for example hair plaiting and selling of secondhand clothes, the necessary skills were acquired on the job, largely through observation. In effect, even if the respondents had received some training they may have failed to see it as such. The respondents would appear to have interpreted training to mean attendance at a particular training institution, rather than considering apprenticeship also as a form of training.

For most of the women and men who answered that they had some form of training, the length of training was less than one year (table 5). Apart from training at the premises, a few entrepreneurs had received training in such places as village polytechnics, technical institutes, the YMCA, the Singer Sewing Machine Company, or had merely attended seminars lasting a few days.

Table 5

Length of training of entrepreneurs in Nairobi

	Female	*Male*
< 1 year	09	10
2 - 3 years	02	07
> 3 years	01	01
No training	07	01
Total	19	18

An overwhelming number of both women and men expressed the need to have some form of further training: 84% of women and 72% of men expressed their willingness for such training.

This is despite their having already received apprenticeship training which could perhaps be explained by their interpretation of training. They perhaps think that if they attended training in established government training establishments they could get some official recognition and thereby attract capital or other support for their enterprises, or even be able to move out of the difficult life of the informal sector and join the formal sector.

It has been generally observed that those in the *jua kali* who have the opportunity of receiving formal training in government training institutions, have a tendency to abandon informal sector activities for the formal sector when the going gets tough.

(f) Mode of establishment and entrepreneurial problems

In regard to how businesses were started there was noticeable gender disparity. While most men saved to start their businesses, married women relied on their husbands for their initial capital. However, this should not be seen as disparity as such, but rather as perceived cooperation, or understanding among couples wishing to set up informal enterprises.

In families faced with financial problems, where both or one of the spouses is working and yet the family income is inadequate, the tendency is to search for other sources of income. In view of the informal nature of the *jua kali* enterprises it would appear that cooperation between married women and their husbands is critical to the sustenance of the enterprises.

As far as problems or difficulties experienced by the entrepreneurs were concerned, financial and marketing problems were predominant. This is a recurring problem within the informal sector. Lacking collateral, informal sector enterprises are unable to attract loans. For women the problem of attracting finance is even further complicated by the cultural barriers which effectively prevent women from inheriting property such as land, which they can use as security to get loans. Indeed, this could explain why most married women have to depend on their husbands' savings to set up informal enterprises. Lack of collateral among women is therefore a major hindrance to their development in the informal sector.

Findings

The following are the main findings of the study:

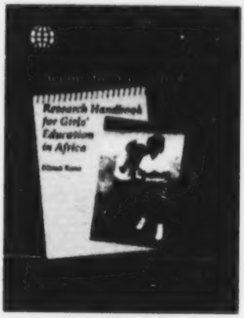
- The informal sector enterprises mostly attract women and men aged between 21 and 35 years of age.
- More than 50% of the informal sector entrepreneurs studied have had post primary education.
- Most of the entrepreneurs studied are in service industries and very few are engaged in manufacturing.
- Enterprises run by women are relatively young in comparison to those of men.
- Apprenticeship or on-the-job training is the most common mode of training observed in the informal sector enterprises that were studied.
- Women entrepreneurs rely on their husbands or parents for financial support in setting up enterprises. This compromises their independence.

Recommendations

The following are the main recommendations of the study:

- Informal sector activities should be assisted financially by advancing loans to entrepreneurs on flexible terms. This is more critical to women entrepreneurs than their male counterparts since cultural traditions have historically denied them the right to own property and as a result most of them have no collateral.

- Secondary school students need to be sensitized to the importance of the informal sector in providing employment so that they abandon their negative attitude toward the sector. They need to be informed that their future employment is most likely to be found in the informal sector.
- Women entrepreneurs should be given all the necessary encouragement so that they may act as mentors for girls who are growing up. This would assist in changing society's attitude toward girls and women as a whole. In this regard we recommend that more training in this sector be focused on girls and women so as to achieve some gender balance.
- Entrepreneurs should be assisted in identifying and securing raw materials for their enterprises.



Eileen Kane
Seeing for Yourself
Research Handbook for Girls' Education in Africa.

This handbook reflects a new dimension in the World Bank's efforts to create effective strategies for girls' education. It is designed for people who do not have professional training in research, but who understand the issues and have important local knowledge. It provides a »how to« guide for school-level personnel, concerned parents, ministry officials, nongovernmental organizations active in education, and others who want to join as partners in helping to reap the economic and social benefits that arise from educating girls.

The handbook is published by the Economic Development Institute which was established by the World Bank in 1955. The author is Head of the Department of Anthroplogy at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland.

The publication can be ordered from:

Distribution Unit, Office of the Publisher, The World Bank, 1818 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433, USA, e-mail: books@worldbank.org or *Publications, Banque mondiale, 66, avenue d'Iéna, 75116 Paris, France.*

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The following article addresses the question of what skills women need in the urban informal sector in Rwanda in order to ensure their survival and that of their families. A crucial part is played in their success or failure by social skills, such as the ability to communicate, persistence, self confidence, etc., skills which everyone acquires in the course of socialization. The author examines in particular the question of the extent to which the acquisition of these social skills is historically and socially determined. The empirical basis of the work is a survey of 50 women in Kigali in December 1991.

Dr Gisela Burckhardt worked for several years for various development aid organizations such as the Evangelical Institute for Development Aid (EZE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in different countries (New York, Nicaragua, Pakistan). Since 1989 she has been working as a freelance consultant.

Gisela Burckhardt

The situation of women in the informal sector: the example of Rwanda. The importance of social skills

Introduction to the issue

Much of Rwanda is now in ruins, and the political future is uncertain. The Rwanda in which I carried out research in 1991 no longer exists. Nonetheless, the question of the skills needed in the informal sector in Rwanda is still important, perhaps more so than ever. The results of the research are still relevant and valid even in Rwanda's changed social and political circumstances. They will also provide pointers for the interpretation and analysis of conditions in neighbouring Central and East African states, which are somewhat similar to those in Rwanda.

As a result of the increasing impoverishment of large parts of Black Africa, growing numbers of people are obliged to seek the means of survival in the informal sector. Pressure of population in the countryside is leading to migration to the cities, and the structural adjustment programmes ordained by the International Monetary Fund are causing shortages in the state sector, so that the formal sector is shrivelling. According to the African Employment Report of ILO (Addis Ababa 1989) 60% of economically active persons in urban areas in Africa were already employed in the informal sector in 1989, 60% of them women.

Women work particularly in the so-called »unproductive« areas such as trade and services, while men are employed in production. The division of labour is a consequence of the gender-specific distribution of roles and tasks in the family and society. Good education does little to change the limited employment opportunities for women in many African countries. Since women are generally poorly educated and have little access to information, they do work which they have traditionally learnt and is to a certain extent an extension of what they do as housewives: they prepare and sell food (beer, fruit juices, bread, cakes, smoked fish, etc.), they sell goods (especially foodstuffs), they make handicraft items, and so on. The range of their activities also depends on whether these can be combined with looking after children. Women thus have restricted mobility in time and space because of their maternal duties. As in other African countries, women are valued in Rwandan society above all as mothers. But women are also responsible for feeding their families. Their role as mothers is therefore always linked to their economic role of providing food for the family.

The concept of skills

What skills and abilities do women need to make their way in the informal sector? In scientific discussion and development practice, the acquisition of skills has usually referred to narrowly occupational skills: technical, craft skills and knowledge, and some commercial knowledge. Training in specific occupational skills has not generally seen the individual as a whole person influenced by her social context, but has merely taught those skills. The whole area of personality development, including behaviour and attitudes, has generally been overlooked. But it is the so-called personality components, such as creativity, flexibility, the ability to grasp situations quickly, the readiness to cooperate, the ability to put up with frustration, reliability, the ability to learn and adapt, etc., which play a major role for the self-employed in the informal sector. I shall therefore concentrate here on the question of how these skills are acquired, before drawing some conclusions as to whether and how they can be influenced.

These personality components are determined largely by the society or its organs of socialization, and are acquired throughout life, although mainly during childhood and youth. It is therefore proper to term them »social skills«, but I shall divide them into two groups, those directed inwards towards the self, and those directed outwards towards others. The first group includes skills such as self-awareness, ability to learn, motivation, creativity, intellectual agility, ability to plan for the future, etc. Outward-looking social skills embrace the ability to communicate with others, tolerance and flexibility. The two groups of skills are interdependent, presupposing and determining each other.

Social skills are formed by the values and attitudes of a society. They are influenced by the economic structure and socio-economic development of a country, which they mould in return. Agricultural countries such as Rwanda produce cultural values different from those of industrialized countries. Primary and secondary socialization is also gender-specific, with the consequence that men's and women's social skills have different emphases. Social skills are thus dependent on a country's economic development, and they take on characteristics peculiar to one culture and one gender.

Research results

The following research results are based on interviews conducted in 1991 — before the war — with approximately 50 Rwandan women in three districts of Kigali, the capital. The women were working in various areas of the informal sector, about half of them as market traders. The aim of the interviews was to find out about the women's economic and social situation, and their socialization, upbringing and education, with the emphasis on what skills the women needed to make their way in the informal sector. One limitation should be noted, that I as a European doubtless interpreted their situation differently from a Rwandan. I am aware of my ethnocentric perception since every culture is and by nature must be ethnocentric. My conclusions are thus only to be regarded as hypotheses.

- Of the 50 women interviewed, 70% lived from trade or services (market traders selling fruit, vegetables, meat, second-hand clothing and coal, proprietors of general stores and restaurants, hairdressers, etc.) and 30% were engaged in production (brewing beer, tailoring, knitting, making fritters, etc.). This corresponds to the usual structure of women's employment in Rwanda and other African countries.

- Among the women questioned, the proportion of single women (46%) was disproportionately high in comparison with the national average (14%).

Photo: G. Burckhardt

- In respect of the women living with a man, a third of the men had a regular income. But even if the men have an income, they are not traditionally obliged to feed their family, this being clearly the role of the woman. The man bears the costs of the house and children's school fees.

- All the women had children, but there was no obvious correlation between a large number of children and low income. It is not the number of children but the mother's sole responsibility for providing for the children which affects income.

- Three quarters of the women had primary education, a surprisingly large number, indicating that the frequent assumption that women in the informal sector are mostly illiterate is not accurate.

- Three quarters of the women had completed formal (22%) or informal (48%) vocational education. Those women who were engaged in what can be seen as productive activities had usually collected some vocational experience in the field in which they later became self-employed. The traders, on the other hand, often had no informal training or had previously had a job with no relation to what they were doing at the time of the interview.

- Only 40% of the women interviewed could save, which suggests that most women need their small daily profit to maintain their family. The 40% who did save only rarely invested their money in their activities, using it nearly always to meet family requirements such as building a house or holding a family celebration.

- The women saw lack of capital and competition as their greatest problems. In reply to the question »What do you need to start a business?«, the women did not give highest priority to capital (82%), but mentioned above all »being able to calculate« and »having good relations with customers« (both 86%). Self-confidence was also seen by most as very important (76%).

To sum up, women can seldom build up capital because of their responsibility for their families unless the men meet at least part of the costs of feeding the family. There is therefore a great dearth of capital, exacerbated by the fact that women have no access to bank loans because they cannot provide security. (Women in Rwanda may not own or inherit land.) One of the reasons why women are in competition is that because of their socialization and upbringing, and lack of capital, few fields of activity are open to them.

The importance of social skills

The research demonstrates that the women perceive no lack of occupational skills. As far as they are concerned, it is not so much occupational and commercial skills which are the keys to successful activity in the informal sector as their **social skills**. **Outward-looking social skills** were accorded even greater importance by the women (see above) than capital. This result is confirmed by a questionnaire administered by the Rwandan Ministry of Industry and Crafts (MINIMART) to 459 small and medium enterprises (mostly run by men) in all parts of the country in 1990: 45% of those interviewed regarded customer appreciation as the most important criterion of success in business.

Occupational skills were given relatively low priority. It might be thought that this view is peculiar to the interviewees selected, as most of the women were employed in trade and services, where specific occupational training is perhaps less important than in manufacturing. However, let us compare the MINIMART survey once again. Here too, the men working in production gave relatively low priority to the quality and creativity of their work (only 21% of those interviewed regarded this aspect as crucial to the success of a business). In the opinion of the interviewees, the buying and selling of products was not so much dependent on quality — in other words, the level of craftsmanship was not the most important consideration — as on the relationship between the buyer and seller, that is, on human relations.

The importance of this social skill can be deduced from the values system and socialization of Rwandan men and women. The group orientation that prevails in Rwanda and the way in which children are brought up in consequence, together with other specific cultural value perceptions (such as religion, the experience of agriculture that has been communally amassed, and the resultant understanding of time and work) influence the formation of social skills. The traditional aims of Rwandan education relate to the orientation towards the well-being of the group and ethnic survival. The emphasis is on the society, and hence on social relations between people. Because the society always used to care for the individual, he or she was more concerned with the relationship to his or her environment than with individual, personal success. This attitude evidently still persists, which explains the high priority given by the women interviewed to the social skills that are directed outwards.

The women interviewed said little about the significance of **inward-looking social skills**. They did believe that self-confidence was important to their activities. But the value of creativity, innovativeness, the readiness to take risks, etc., was relatively alien to them. The small entrepreneurs who were interviewed in the MINIMART survey also regarded these social skills as not particularly important. The reasons for this attitude can be no more than surmised, as in the following paragraphs.

SOLO
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VEGETAL

Photo: G. Burckhardt

The entire approach to traditional education in Rwanda can be viewed positively because it is inclusive and not alienating, but on the other hand it also provides less space for the development of the individual. There is no emphasis on developing anything new, merely on persevering with what has been tried and tested. The traditional content of education is selected by virtue of its utility, it is largely functional, and learning methods are characterized by observation and imitation. Inward-looking social skills such as creativity, innovativeness, self-awareness, etc., which are necessary for entrepreneurial activities, are obviously not particularly encouraged by traditional Rwandan education.

Girls are at a particular disadvantage in terms of preparation for working life. They are brought up from an early age within the family to be modest, obedient and above all subordinate. This type of behaviour is in distinct contrast to the self-confident behaviour needed by the self-employed.

Their entire education is, moreover, directed towards their future roles as mothers and agricultural producers, while they are obliged to help their mothers in all the activities within and outside the home. Since most of the women interviewed in this investigation came from the countryside, they learnt about the work required in subsistence farming. Their knowledge of agricultural production is of little use to them, however, as traders. Because there is no longstanding tradition of trading in Rwanda (as there is, for example, in West Africa), this is a new field in which women must first gain some experience.

The effects of the education received during primary socialization are seen in the work that women do in the informal sector. Hence, women in the market usually sell goods that are more easily damaged, and bring in less money, than those sold by men. Women are prevented by lack of capital, for one thing, from changing to other, perhaps more durable goods, but frequently they also lack the courage to do so. The women themselves gave reasons such as keeping to what was tried and tested, fear of the unknown and uncertainty, and nervousness about taking risks.

Schools, which were introduced by the colonial power and hence were initially a culturally alien organ of socialization, do stress individualistic goals of education and select on performance, but frequently do not differ so fundamentally in other respects from traditional education. Instead of creativity they demand conformity with established norms; instead of exploring subject content they expect it to be memorized. Rwanda's attempt to reform primary schools by making them more relevant to rural environments, which set out to match teaching more closely to the requirements of the majority of the population living in the countryside, failed because most parents expected or hoped that their children would be helped to move upward socially by going to school. Hence, schools do not prepare individuals for work in the informal sector either.

There is no direct connection between schooling and income: attending school does not automatically lead to a higher income. It appears nevertheless to be one of a number of preconditions (including capital, for example) for the chance of earning more, as it can at least be observed that most women with little schooling remain in jobs that pay less (such as selling vegetables). The research carried out leads to the conclusion, therefore, that schooling **may** be a precondition for higher earnings. The essential thing that school attendance provides appears to be not so much the learning of cultural techniques as its effects on the development of the personality. Self-confidence generally grows through being able to read, write and calculate. As has been said, self-confidence is of great importance in the women's estimation.

Schools reinforce the virtues of modesty and reserve in girls. Gender-specific roles are strengthened through classroom teaching, especially strongly in the case of domestic science colleges. During childhood, women thus learn patterns of behaviour which are not particularly conducive to working in the informal sector.

To sum up, the following conclusion can be drawn: that while outward-looking social skills are particularly encouraged during primary socialization, inward-looking skills are not greatly developed, even in school. The question thus arises as to how these inward-looking social skills can be encouraged among the women.

Critique of existing promotional approaches

To the extent that national and international development cooperation concerns itself with the informal sector, its principal goal is to enhance the economic productivity of that sector. The emphasis is placed on the potential of an element of commerce that can be exploited in the interest of the national economy, less so in that of the people involved. That vision is contested here. It is not the development of the sector, the raising of its productivity, the increase in investment and the introduction of technological innovations which should be the main aim of development cooperation, but the improvement of the living conditions of those dependent for their livelihoods on this sector. There is an essential difference between an approach that is oriented towards the target groups, and an approach that takes the sector as a whole, even if it is argued that developing the sector will necessarily benefit the people involved in the long term. The somewhat marginal support given to the sector to date also has the consequence that it is largely men who profit from the aid, as it is almost exclusively the so-called productive sector which receives support.

In 1991, German vocational training aid still primarily went to the formal, modern sector, through training in commercial and technical male occupations. The revised sectoral paper prepared by the

Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development in 1992 does allow for the promotion of target groups in the informal sector, but few consequences of this have yet been seen in practice. The new sectoral paper no longer talks only in terms of purveying technological, technical and business skills, but also includes the promotion of attitudes and behaviour, i.e., social skills. However, projects of that nature are as yet rare exceptions, and are mainly supported by non-governmental organizations.

The advancement of women is verbally accorded greater significance in national and international development cooperation, but in practice it only plays a minor part. Out of 80 projects of the Vocational Training department of the Association for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) carried out by that body in 1991, largely in the formal sector, only two are women's projects. Studies have found that vocational training for men is justified above all on economic grounds while the promotion of women derives from social considerations. Since a gender-specific division into male and female employment affects both the formal and the informal sector, women can only be reached if women's occupations are explicitly targeted. In the rare cases when women are supported in the informal sector, this is frequently done only through isolated measures, and a holistic approach is usually lacking.

Suggestions how to support women in the informal sector in Rwanda

We have to assume that the disadvantages facing women in Rwanda can only be eliminated by reforms affecting the whole of society. This is of course an extremely difficult, long-term task. Development cooperation should not place the emphasis on individual measures but on support for structural change which increases women's control of resources and gives them greater freedom of action in the public domain. Development cooperation should play a greater part in this area than it has to date.

So far, individual measures have been implemented to promote women in the informal sector, such as initial and continuing training courses, loans to women, start-up aid, etc. All these projects serve to satisfy the needs of practical survival (practical gender needs) and are important, of course. But there is a lack of programmes which allow women to transform the awareness which they already have and need to develop about their position in society into actions, and which aim to create more rights for women and greater control of resources (strategic gender needs). We can assume that if the position of women were considerably strengthened, they could meet some of their practical gender needs themselves (e.g., access to credit with their property as security, if they were allowed to inherit). They would then be independent of, or at least less dependent on, help from outside, which hinders them from developing self-confidence and even stops them from acting for themselves. Many women accept their social oppression as inevitable because of their socialization and upbringing, and/or they see no opportunity of changing their position. Support for women must therefore aim to make them increasingly aware of the social, patriarchal causes of poverty and the structural reasons for female subordination, and to combat these.

If women are to receive help such as this, it is best done through support for collaborative effort, as women cannot change their social position, enlarge their field of action and attain their ends individually, only in collaboration. Through collaborative effort and empowerment, women also gain faith in their own strength and self-awareness. Their inward-looking social skills have received little encouragement during their primary and secondary socialization, as indicated above. This situation could be remedied at least in part through a collaborative struggle for their rights and mutual support. The courage to try something new can only be developed if people have sufficient self-confidence.

Support for processes which change women's circumstances frequently fails because the funding organizations do not find the right partners in the developing country, but often they do not look for them. This has to do with a lack of awareness at both ends about the structural causes of female poverty, and to a degree also with insufficient determination on both sides really to effect a change. There were in fact a number of women's groups in Rwanda with differing aims. The Rwandan women's association Duterimbere is or was one of the most important organizations in the country concerned with promoting women in the informal sector. It granted women loans in order to help them to obtain a secure income, but did not try to attack the structural causes of the disadvantaging of women.

From the above considerations, the following emphases should be given to development cooperation:

- Support for those women's groups which are clearly committed to fundamental socio-cultural, economic and legal change in the situation of women (strategic gender needs), e.g. support for initiatives which are working for women's right of inheritance.

- Aid for networking among women's organizations so that regular exchanges can take place, enabling groups to share information and to learn from each other.

- Creation of access to capital/loans for women. If women could inherit, for example, they could offer the banks surety and would be credit-worthy.

- Aid for the development of alternative teaching and learning methods, e.g. initial and continuing training of teachers. Since a large percentage of women have primary school education, different teaching and learning methods in schools, aiming at autonomous use of subject matter rather than memorizing, would also help to promote inward-looking social skills.

Any promotion of women must take account of their double role as mothers and producers. The geographical and temporal restrictions placed on women by their maternal obligations must always be taken into account in support for their economic activities in the informal sector, and they must be given some relief from their obligations as mothers. Support for women must not, however, be limited to a kind of social security, or to encouragement of their money-making activities. It has to be multi-dimensional and lead from support for women to an integrated women's policy of attempting to attack the structural causes of the disadvantaging of women.

On the basis of an empirical study dating from 1992-93, the author explores training and conditions of training in small enterprises in the informal sector. What role is played by social relationships, what is taught and learnt — and by what means, what are the prospects after such training, and what conclusions can be drawn about the requirements for educational initiatives?
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Madhu Singh

Informal training and socio-cultural regulators in small enterprises in New Delhi

This article sets out to explore training and the conditions under which it is carried out in small enterprises, which are torn between market mechanisms (supply and demand, the desire to expand and cost-minimization), and social institutions such as the family and private societies. There are many symbioses between elements of these two fields. The family arena is characterized by relationships with family members and others. Work done in this arena is generally not remunerated (housework, childwork, familiy help). The network of relationships within private societies rests largely on common cultural, social and economic interests (village associations and castes). Activities in this arena are also influenced by group interests.

In the formal sector, education and training are drawn into the ambit of regulations governing the market economy, trade and state institutions. These social costs are reflected in the prices of products (which are made dearer) and the form of employment (wage labour). Among the features of secure wage employment are the guarantee of a minimum wage, social insurance, holiday entitlement, opportunities for continuing education, etc. State regulation is of less importance in the informal sector, on the other hand. Conditions of employment are not protected by law in the small enterprises in the informal sector, nor are the relations between employer and employee regulated. The fact that the state has little control over the informal sector is reflected in the fact that while those working in the sector frequently have school education, few have formal vocational training. This applies generally to the whole informal sector. Only 13 per cent of the entrepreneurs interviewed had received formal vocational training; 87 per cent were therefore without such training. The family, the household economy and private societies are, on the other hand, of key importance in the informal sector. The particularly strong position of the family can be seen in the fact that the costs of training and subsistence for those in work, as well as provision for their old age, are borne by the family and the household, although the benefit of such workers accrues to the market economy without such costs being reflected in the level of wages.

In the informal sector, small enterprises have an importance similar to that of the family. Through what appears to be a »hidden« but nonetheless a comprehensive »learning and teaching system«, the

Foundary in the informal sector in New Delhi.

Photo: M. Singh

informal sector makes a major contribution to labour forces' acquisition of skills and hence to their ability to survive in the sector. The significance of informal learning has increased as the sector has grown. Before effective and appropriate education and training provision can be planned, it is therefore important that the existing informal training arrangements, which are so important for social reproduction, are taken into account. If they do not acquire skills in this way, people will not be able to secure the means of survival for themselves and their families.

An empirical study

This empirical study was conducted in the years 1992-93. Eight areas of activity were selected: furniture-making, metal goods manufacturing, motor scooter repair, tailoring, the manufacture of plastic items, office supplies and pottery, and printing. Pottery and tailoring are among the activities traditionally carried out by women.

The empirical study refers to field research in three districts of New Delhi (Trinagar, Sargarpur and Uttam Nagar), where the economic activities selected are carried out in the informal sector.

The criterion for the selection of interviewees was the size of enterprise. Proprietors employing up to 10 people were interviewed. This upper limit was not observed rigidly, however, as larger enterprises had grown up that also belonged to the informal sector according to the declared criteria. A total of 13 women and 92 men were interviewed.

Production conditions in small enterprises

In my empirical research on New Delhi, analysis of production conditions shows that two broad categories of small enterprises can be distinguished: one of these is small enterprises which work as **suppliers to larger firms in the formal sector**. Small enterprises engaged in tailoring, making clothes for export, are the clearest example of the first category of suppliers. When production is put out to small production units in the informal sector, one of the consequences is that those enterprises have to specialize in particular areas of production. As suppliers, small enterprises become arms of the larger concerns, providing cheap goods for mass consumption and cheap labour, while the profits go exclusively to the larger enterprises.

There are also small enterprises in which products are manufactured largely **for the local market**, so that their nexus of relationships is chiefly woven around the supplies provided by small enterprises to each other. Unlike the enterprises in the first category, which make goods for exporting firms, these close local networks serve their own markets and are thus relatively autonomous.

In both categories of small enterprises, significant resources are made available to the enterprises by the household economy and the family, and private societies. One important element in this is the workers, who may be family members who help out, informal apprentices, occasional workers, unskilled help or waged workers. In order to reduce costs and risk, **family members who help out** are used as unwaged workers: from the histories of the working lives of the 105 proprietors of small enterprises interviewed, it is shown that 18.5 per cent had previously acquired their skills as family helpers in their family enterprises.

This sheds light on how people learn in small enterprises. The use of »family helpers« in the informal sector is widespread, especially in craftwork. Craft enterprises include those of the enterprises studied in which particular castes have specialized, fixed trades and in which skills are taught and passed on within the family. As they carry on their trades as caste occupations, people are more or less continuously engaged, but there are seasonal variations in demand for their products. Craftsmen used to be independent, they and their families controlling and carrying out the whole process of production and marketing. The splitting up of production has, however, led to a deterioration in the working conditions of traditional craftsmen and their families, as most activities are now performed by untrained unskilled workers on low wages.

Nonetheless, 29 per cent of the small entrepreneurs interviewed had previously been employed as **waged workers** in small enterprises in the informal sector. Waged work includes both »temporary« and »long-term« employment. The entrepreneurs had usually been temporary waged workers doing regular jobs in unregistered small enterprises in the informal sector. Demand is just sufficient to occupy waged workers six days a week.

Informal apprenticeship

One of the principal ways of minimizing risk and costs to an enterprise is to expand the enterprise by using informal apprentices: 35.3 per cent of the proprietors had acquired skills through informal apprenticeship, and 57 per cent of those now owning businesses had employed a total of 995 informal apprentices since starting their businesses.

There is no general scheme or system of training in informal apprenticeship (for example, no certificates or other objective evidence of level of performance can be obtained). A system of public importance has nonetheless developed on an informal basis.

The significance of this training system can be seen at two levels: on the demand side, many young people look for a livelihood outside traditional agriculture. Since the prospects for employment in

Manufacture of wooden frames for wall-clocks.

Photo: M. Singh

enterprises in the formal sector are extremely slight, people realize that there is a chance of being able to set up as self-employed entrepreneurs by means of »informal training« in small enterprises in the informal sector.

The proprietors of the enterprises, for their part, regard accepting »informal apprentices« — together with family members who help out — as an ideal way of enhancing their businesses without the accompanying overheads and the consequent increase in the risk to the enterprise. It gives them greater flexibility to meet demand. The main motive for engaging anyone is to improve the business by using cheap labour — especially occasional help.

Since there is no legal regulation or formal agreement, »informal training« follows social and cultural mechanisms as well as the law of supply and demand, and this can be seen in the structural features of this training.

Fewer apprentices are trained in trades requiring only simple assembly techniques, such as the manufacture of office supplies and clothing, than in trades working at a higher level of craft and technical skill, such as metal goods, plastics, pottery, furniture-making, motor scooter repair and printing.

The connection between the low importance given to informal training and relatively **short-term apprenticeship** is evident in the manufacture of office supplies and clothing, where the majority of apprenticeships only last for between six months and a year. In metal goods manufacturing, on the other hand, the average duration of apprenticeship is 2.2 years, in furniture-making it is 3.8 years, in printing 4.5 years, motor scooter repairs 3.6 years, pottery 2 years and plastic goods manufacture 2.4 years. The duration of an apprenticeship is in fact governed individually by the progress made by the apprentice, the interest shown by the master in the apprentice's work, and the funds available to him. There is no fixed time which an apprentice must serve. Much depends on how quickly the apprentice acquires the skills and can operate the machinery. This in turn depends on what experience he has had in other small enterprises.

Fifty-seven of the 60 proprietors had not concluded any written **apprenticeship contracts** with their apprentices. Only three of those interviewed had such an agreement. Only 9 of the 60 entrepreneurs demanded an examination. »Informal regulation« plays a major part, however. Although there is no examination and no formal test, there are various informal ways of deciding whether the apprenticeship is successfully concluded. Apprentices have the requisite skills when they can manufacture the products and have gained experience.

None of the entrepreneurs demanded an **apprenticeship fee**. Even where an apprenticeship fee is usual, they would rather forgo the fee than the apprentice's work. Unlike the situation in West Africa, the family is not under an obligation to equip the apprentice with tools, basic materials and work clothing relevant to the trade. Rather, 45 out of 60 entrepreneurs paid the apprentices wages. These included piece-rates and irregular wages, paid only when there was an order to be met. There are often additional non-monetary forms of remuneration. Fifteen stated that they gave rewards in kind to apprentices as well as wages. Eight provided food, and seven accommodation. Advances against wages were also given.

Training methods

The question about how apprentices were trained elicited very varied replies. The most common method of acquiring skills was **observation** of the master (15) and others in the enterprise (16). This is taken a little further if the master **demonstrates** a particular work procedure (13) or **explains** what steps have to be taken to do a particular job (11). It is less usual for an apprentice to learn by trial and error or »do it yourself«. It is rare for an apprentice to ask questions (1) or attend courses. Skills are thus acquired largely through observation, by learning from the proprietor of the enterprise and others working in it. The proprietor should not necessarily be regarded as the only model. The other workers are also seen as examples.

Training methods are related to both the complexity of the trade and the master's level of education. They remain basic and simple, all the same. Specific knowledge is conveyed in accordance with the requirements of the work in hand. When tasks are allocated, the emphasis is on the work to be done rather than on learning objectives or elements of training. There is no theoretical training. Nothing of relevance to training is learnt from routine jobs.

Apprenticeship often starts with assisting others, apprentices gradually learning about tools and work processes. Small entrepreneurs demand that apprentices perform private services besides working for the business.

The informal method of training is not an unregulated system. Most of the apprentices had no written apprenticeship agreement. However, »informal regulation« is evident, for example, when applicants have to undergo a test by standing at a machine and making part of a product. It is a matter of pure chance whether the stages in their learning are determined by the work in hand, or build on one another. The transmission of skills is not logically planned and implemented but is governed by chance, by the demands of the work and the personal relationships with other workers. It is only by demonstration and example that apprentices learn what is immediately required for the work in hand. Trainees are employed wherever there is enough work for them rather than where they can best learn a particular skill.

Training methods are also related to the traditional manner of passing on knowledge within a particular trade. Especially in the traditional crafts, such as pottery, carpentry and tailoring, which are carried on as caste occupations, »apprentices« learn by following craft tradition, observing and working in with others. At first they fetch and carry, then perform simple tasks, and only at the end are they occasionly permitted to work independently. Simple, routine tasks are performed by imitation. Workers are only taught what is needed to make the goods.

Although the entrepreneurs consider business/entrepreneural skills as important as instrumental and basic skills, it is mainly practical craft and technical skills that are taught. In addition, the knowledge needed to survive is taught, such as minor repairs and other servicing. The practical and craft skills are not complemented by theoretical knowledge, however.

Workers are better acquainted with instrumental and practical skills (operating and repairing machinery) than with business skills, such as deciding on raw materials, marketing, making contracts and costing. Most workers do not expect business skills to be taught in their existing employment. Where such skills exist, they have been acquired through »learning by doing« or during earlier informal apprenticeships.

The importance of social and cultural mechanisms in informal training

Apprentices' choice of occupation depends in part on social, family and cultural factors. Occupations are chosen because relatives are employed in them. Traditional occupations usually offer the only chance of learning a trade.

Proprietors of enterprises select apprentices on grounds of both family allegiance, and work experience and performance. When

Metal goods manufacturing. Photo: M. Singh

wage workers are engaged, work experience and performance play a greater part than family origin. For both apprentices and waged workers, however, educational level is equally unimportant as a criterion for selection.

The system of advances against wages also points to the importance of social and cultural »regulators«: trustworthy informal apprentices are often offered advances, which are in effect interest-free loans. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, proprietors want to attract particular workers. Secondly, employees accept such advances because they have to cover the immediate costs of a wedding or an illness in the family. The payment binds the worker to the proprietor until he can pay pack the loan. Such a system not only keeps the worker in debt but also reduces the capital available to the proprietor. This system of advances transforms a quasi market-oriented relationship between employer and employee into a more complex personal relationship.

In many enterprises, the proprietor tries to tie apprentices by informal means. »Trustworthy and promising« candidates are given preference. They alone are trained in the business. In this way, in-house informal apprenticeship is institutionalized, that is, the acquisition of skills by the workers tied in this way is planned in advance on a long term and continual basis.

The friendly social relations with other workers in the enterprises stand out. Relations with other workers play a decisive part in the learning of skills. The approval of those already employed is crucial to the recruitment of an apprentice. This process both reduces the organizational costs of recruitment and responsibility for the apprentice and, by relying on those already employed in the enterprise, makes it easier for the apprentice to adapt and to fit into its daily running.

Traditional informal apprenticeship in a period of change

In recent decades, the »informal apprenticeship« system in India has changed considerably. The tradition of the close relationship between the apprentice and the master seems no longer to be so important. The tradition of identification with the master as the model is gradually being eroded. This is attributable firstly to the collapse of traditional crafts, and secondly to the fact that entrepreneurs in traditional craft trades wish to see their children take up different occupations.

Unlike the previous work-positions of proprietors of the enterprises, most of the present labour-force work as occasional help and as unskilled workers. In the enterprises investigated, 43.5 per cent of the workers were occasional, 25.6 per cent unskilled, 10.8 per cent family members helping out, a similar percentage wage workers and 9.4 per cent informal apprentices.

Only a small number of »informal apprentices« are engaged because increasing preference is given to occasional workers. Apprentices have to be content nowadays with the designation »helper« if they want to learn skills in an enterprise.

The main reason why so few are engaged is that apprentices are expensive and complicated. Given that most of the proprietors are confronted by a hostile institutional environment, they find that feeding and training apprentices is an additional burden to them.

The reduced demand for informal apprentices can be seen clearly in the fact that the duration of apprenticeship for informal apprentices has become shorter in comparison with that served by the proprietors. The latter had spent longer in informal apprenticeship: 72.3 per cent between 1 and 4 years; 24.6 per cent as much as 5 to 9 years; and 3.1 per cent even longer. The present-day informal apprentices were serving an average of one year. This has been brought about by the following trends in the current practice of informal apprenticeship. Firstly, working conditions in many enterprises are very poor. Secondly, apprentices are regarded by proprietors as nothing more than cheap unskilled labour. This attitude of the proprietors towards the apprentices contributes to the latter's desire not to serve long in the enterprise. The traditional system of binding apprenticeship appears to have changed. Proprietors' interest in informal apprenticeship seems to have declined because they have less financial possibility of employing the apprentices later.

Self-employment: the only option after informal training

What appears at first glance to be a way of enhancing an enterprise proves in the longer term to be a restriction on its development. After training lasting between 1 and 4 years, 16.3 per cent (30) of the present entrepreneurs had entered the labour market, which essentially offered them only one choice, that of becoming self-employed. This led to overcapacity in production and services, with the result that all 30 attempts at founding a business failed.

Remarkably, most of the attempts were made in fields which were not those in which the interviewees had received informal training. In New Delhi's informal sector, it often happens that people begin as amateurs, which means that they buy machinery and workshop equipment with the aim of acquiring at least basic knowledge through »learning by doing« and »trial and error«. The entrepreneurs had tried two, three or four times to found a business in different fields before they could sustain themselves financially. Failed entrepreneurs liquidated their businesses or recovered some of their capital by selling their used machinery in order to start up again in another industry. Constant change is a reflection of the relative instability of enterprises in the informal sector.

People need to start businesses in order to keep themselves and their families.

Admittedly, 27 of the 60 proprietors with apprentices who were questioned said that they were willing to go on employing the apprentices when their apprenticeship had ended, but most appreciated that the majority of apprentices did not want to stay in the enterprise after training, for various reasons. When they were asked why they wanted to go on employing the apprentices, they said that the apprentices were familiar with the way the enterprise worked. It would save them the trouble, time and energy of explaining everything again to new apprentices from scratch. They remembered, however, that they did not stay in the enterprises in which they had received informal training. Apprentices move from workshop to workshop because they want to amass experience so that they can become self-employed later. Only in a few enterprises is it usual to engage apprentices with the aim of employing them full-time in the business and granting them the appropriate increases in wages and improvements in working conditions.

Implications for educational provision

Training in small enterprises needs to be strengthened, as it is generally the most effective and efficient method of developing skills. There needs to be a balance between business, organizational and instrumental skills, and basic general knowledge.

Consequently, both provision which concentrates on self-sufficiency and initiative of one's own (learning by doing), and provision which leaves space for independent development, should receive support. Specific policy measures (such as upgrading of training in the informal sector) could in the long term usher in structural change which would remove social injustice and unequal power relationships.

One important task of appropriate support is to give workforce in the informal sector political power. Workforce in small enterprises have very little opportunity of influencing decisions about their conditions of work. Improvements in training possibilities can only occur if workers in small enterprises can have recourse to employment protection legislation.

The existing organization of small enterprises into self-help professional interest groups should be supported to establish and improve basic and continuing vocational training in small enterprises.

The family is an important cooperative institution. Particularly in times of economic recession it provides support for individuals to fall back on. The family guarantees individuals an income when they are unemployed. In New Delhi, families are diversifying their sources of income. Education must therefore support strategies of social security.

Promotional measures should not be based on formal vocational models. Rather, the ways in which small entrepreneurs safeguard

Manufacture of steel utensils.

Photo: M. Singh

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themselves should be respected. Given the insecurity which surrounds them, entrepreneurs have developed competencies which are suited to the situation of small enterprises. The economic situation of small entrepreneurs is influenced by the lack of social and economic legal security. This lack of security has negative effects not only on the employment situation, but also on the possibilities of training in the small enterprises.

With growing unemployment and decreasing chances for the creation of new jobs in the formal economy, the so-called »informal sector« is frequently the only alternative available to an increasing number of people — especially in urban settings — in their struggle to earn however modest a living for themselves and their families. Although such small economic ventures are often at odds with industrial safety requirements or taxation regulations, they seem to work quite well to secure a basic existence, and even afford educational and training opportunities, as Sigvor Bakke-Seeck, from the University of Bremen in Germany, observed in Lima, Peru.

Sigvor Bakke-Seeck

Skills in the informal sector in Lima, Peru. An empirical study of selected production and service trades

The informal sector

There is no shortage of theories and definitions of the informal sector, but still there is no general consensus as to what the concept encompasses. Despite the many controversies concerning the nature of the informal sector, there is common agreement on the operational criteria for identifying the enterprises operating in this sector: they are small or micro-scale, and usually avoid official regulations and taxes.

The informal sector certainly includes a wide range of activities ranging from the most simple services, such as washing cars on the street, to important manufacturing trades and transport systems (the latter are in the case of Lima mostly in the hands of informal operators). It is, however, often difficult to draw a distinct line between the so-called informal and the formal sector due to the continuous inter-relationship between the two sectors.

Nonetheless, contrary to earlier beliefs, it is by now clear that the informal sector is not going to disappear automatically with economic growth. There is every reason to believe that a large and probably increasing segment of the labour force will be engaged in the informal sector for very many years to come.

Thus the informal sector in Peru, as well as in other developing countries, will spread further during the next few decades since it is unlikely that general conditions, such as economic recession and inefficient educational systems, will improve significantly. Furthermore, in most developing countries, as is the case in Peru, the rural exodus towards the cities is unlikely to decrease. Hence, it can probably be expected that the informal sector will continue to expand in both of its main aspects: informality as embodied in small-scale enterprises, and informality as the avoidance of regulations.

In Lima the informal sector has increased by approximately 10% p.a. since 1980, and depending on the statistical sources it now comprises between 50 and 70 per cent of the economically active population. There are no indications, so far, that the actual economic growth experienced by the Peruvian formal economy has led to any reduction in the informal sector. The trend is rather the reverse. The ongoing privatization process of previously state-owned enterprises as well as a »lean slimmed down« personnel policy within the public sector in general has had something of an »inflationary« effect upon the informal sector.

The sample

For our field survey in Lima, we selected eight trades that are common in the informal sector, most of which were expected to possess more trade-specific skills than many other informal activities. Four of the trades we classified as manufacturing trades: furniture-making, metal work, shoe-manufacturing and textile manufacturing, whereas the remainder were classified as service-oriented trades: car repair, radio/TV repair, hairdressing and streetside restaurants. Not surprisingly it turned out that only the latter trade can be performed without any previous trade-related vocational training or an informal apprenticeship. Because of its specific nature it can rather be seen as an extension of traditional housework, though on a larger scale.

All other trades studied demand more trade-specific training in one form or another.

It was observed during our field survey that more and more well-educated young people seek their living in the informal sector as their employment opportunities in the formal modern sector are decreasing. Hence, surprisingly at first, even 9.2% of the sample entrepreneurs have been to university or were still studying at the time of the survey.

About one third have completed a formal or non-formal vocational training in school form, generally lasting two to three years. The basic educational level of the sample is also relatively high; none of the sample entrepreneurs was illiterate, and 82% have some secondary schooling, 67% of them having obtained a secondary school diploma.

Access to informal sector activities

The acquisition of craft and technical skills in its broadest sense, combined with trade-related experiences of various kinds, are a necessary prerequisite for starting any business in the trades studied. Nevertheless, our field study revealed that these alone are not a sufficient pre-condition in order to succeed. This was one of the main findings of our investigation.

The great majority of the sample entrepreneurs claim to have suffered no problems concerning their technical skills when they launched their business, and at the time of the survey 85% still reported having no problems whatsoever with regard to their trade-specific craft or technical skills. Rather, lack of sufficient and appropriate business and management skills had represented the main obstacle in the starting phase, and later the very same problems had frequently impeded their further growth and expansion.

The entrepreneurs' self-evaluation indicates that organizational competences rank much higher than purely craft and technical skills in ensuring access to informal activities.

Thus 83% of the sample entrepreneurs judge that possessing an »entrepreneurial spirit« had been of most decisive importance in their relative success. It is interesting to note that, according to them, improved technical skills play a less significant role than improved business skills in any kind of entrepreneurial success.

Despite the fact that only 15% considered insufficient technical skills to cause them any actual problems, most sample entrepreneurs implicitly recognized their frequently insufficient technical skills, as nearly 74% expressed their desire to receive further technical training. This interesting finding reflects an uncritical and inconsistent attitude towards their own technical skills which seems to be a widespread and common trait of micro and small entrepreneurs.

Financing and credit

The difficulties that informal sector entrepreneurs face in obtaining credit on the same terms as modern enterprises were confirmed by our field survey. Only 5 out of the 130 sample entrepreneurs had been able to start their businesses by means of private informal loans. The great majority, 71%, reported having started out on the basis of their own savings. Most entrepreneurs still complained about financial problems, but in general they were reluctant to make use of the flourishing informal loan market. Their access to the formal loan market remains very restricted. In critical cases they preferred to resort to other family members or relatives and friends instead of to the informal money-lenders who give loans on highly unfavourable terms. An insignificant proportion of the sample entrepreneurs had got access to more formal loans through a local NGO, but the size of the loan had not allowed for any considerable expansion of their enterprise. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind in this context that many informal sector entrepreneurs are skeptical of any kind of loans originating from anywhere outside the circle of relatives and friends. They do not want to become dependent on any formal credit institution. This also reflects the Latin American logic of family production, which is often present in the informal sector: the entrepreneurs are satisfied with their business when it allows them to feed the family and to live fairly well. This attitude, however, does not refer to all strata of the informal sector. Meanwhile, a significant proportion of the informal sector entrepreneurs have adopted more traditional capitalist entrepreneurial attitudes, and thus primarily pursue expansion of their enterprise.

Nevertheless, legalization of micro and small enterprises could not be observed as the best solution to the financial problem in spite of certain measures taken by the Peruvian authorities in order to facilitate registration of such enterprises.

Employment structure

The employment structure in the sample enterprises gives an impression of the informal sector as an alternative labor market to the formal one. Our sample enterprises, with the exception of 30 entrepreneurs who were working alone at the time of the survey (mainly because of the economic recession), employed a total of 378 individuals apart from the entrepreneurs themselves. Thus the thesis of the »labour-sponge« effect propagated by the ILO can be confirmed within the limits of our investigation. The majority of the workers are stable full-time paid workers (37.5%) and regular family workers and close relatives (24%). Apprentices constitute 12% of all persons employed, whereas the remainder are occasional workers (18.5%) and helpers (8%). In general, female entrepreneurs (except for some textile manufacturers) employ fewer paid workers than male entrepreneurs do, but this can mainly be explained by the nature of their trades.

Apart from the trade of shoe-manufacturing, we found entrepreneurs who work alone (*por cuenta propia*) in all the selected sample trades. Several of these entrepreneurs make use of occasional hired hands when the demand is there.

Income

The periods of prosperity and recession in the informal sector have generally followed those of the formal sector. Thus the majority of the sample entrepreneurs claimed to have experienced their best years in 1987-88 as Peru experienced its most important economic growth during that decade. The worst years were reported to be 1990-1991, during which a rigorous structural adjustment program was imposed.

Although it is a problem of a methodological nature to find out the exact income of the informal entrepreneurs, it is also often difficult for these entrepreneurs to distinguish between the income of the family and that of the enterprise. Thus in some cases the entrepreneurs in our sample were not able to estimate their income. Nevertheless, about 43% of the respondents reported keeping books. It was beyond the scope of this investigation to focus on the income issue in detail. However, we gained the impression that the majority had a fairly good idea about their average income, which in any case was above the average income of skilled workers in the formal sector at that time. The average monthly income of the whole sample was US$ 370, which in 1992 was more than an engineer employed in the public sector would earn. Hence, we conclude that the standard of living for a significant proportion of the sample entrepreneurs was higher than that for skilled workers (approximately US$ 200 on average at the time of the survey) in the formal sector. Nonetheless, at the lower end of the income scale registered in our survey, we find some informal enterprises which practically exist at a level of pure survival. Most of these resort to supplementary earnings through secondary activities, or rely on the contribution of other members of the family to the family income.

Acquisition of skills

Our field study found that trade-specific skills are acquired in a variety of different forms and stages. The process must be viewed in the broadest possible terms since it involves more than just education and training in a strictly formal sense. It also encompasses so-called »hidden« learning. Learning thus takes place as a »by product«, particularly for family members helping out in micro and small enterprises and for wage workers. Some of those who were wage workers employed by enterprises in the formal sector, had received in-service training and were highly qualified skilled workers when they launched their businesses.

Further, it was observed during the investigation that such phases of work not only provide the potential learner with experience that can be added to the primary knowledge acquired; they also provide him with specifically trade and job-related skills and with the entrepreneurial proficiency required for running a small independent business.

Our findings thus state that the process of acquiring the skills needed to be a successful informal sector entrepreneur is made up of building blocks of knowledge, skills and experience. It is the combination of experiences and crucial personal (entrepreneurial) characteristics and qualities, and not simply formal education or training, that makes the accomplished entrepreneur. It is the combination of school, apprenticeship, previous wage employment or working as a family helper, which, in one way or another, altogether serves as a continuous process of apprenticeship. Whilst formal education as it is delivered presently cannot replace any of these building blocks that lead towards creating a valuable micro and small scale entrepreneur, it does enhance each subsequent step of skill development. Thus progress to higher-level trades and activities is facilitated.

In general terms we may conclude that a wide range of skills are required for many informal sector activities and, certainly, many informal sector operators possess and utilize these necessary skills. About 40% of the sample entrepreneurs have not been enrolled in a recognized training institution. Although their competences and trade-specific skills may leave something to be desired, these have mainly been acquired either by apprenticeship or on the job.

Young people are often engaged as apprentices or family helpers and acquire the most necessary skills required for the trade in this way.

Other sources of skill transfer include more or less formal, private, profit-making training institutions. Relatively little is known about their curricula, but for the last decade they seem to have been mushrooming in Lima. Some of the sample entrepreneurs have attended training courses organized by not-for-profit institutions, such as various NGOs which have long been active in this field. One third of the entrepreneurs have attended training courses in governmental institutions, and the majority of those have been to a technical or commercial secondary school.

In the total sample handicraft and technical skills have mainly been acquired in training centers and/or through informal apprenticeship. In most of the service-oriented trades studied, such as car and radio/TV repair, as well as in the case of hairdressing, technical skill acquisition is normally achieved by a combination of both kinds of training.

By far the majority of the business and management skills which we found to be the most decisive for any further expansion and development in the competitive environment of the informal sector, are acquired on the job by work in the informal sector.

An important finding in our investigation is that informal apprenticeship seems to be widespread in the informal sector of Lima. Thus 83% of the sample entrepreneurs claimed to have served some kind of apprenticeship, some of them for longer periods, others for relatively short periods. In some cases it could be controversial to even classify the shortest learning periods (for example, one week or one month) as an apprenticeship at all. Moreover, it turned out that entrepreneurs who have received pre-service technical vocational training tend to do shorter informal apprenticeships than others.

Moreover, considering the importance of the various skills for the survival and potential development of micro and small enterprises, we must not neglect the fact that the needs and wishes of the informal entrepreneurs may vary substantially. Some of them only require a niche in the market which can guarantee them a more or less stable income which is enough to survive, whereas others wish for business opportunities which imply social and economic mobility.

Hence, in the discussion of the potential economic and entrepreneurial development of the informal sector it should be borne in mind that a significant proportion of the micro and small entrepreneurs have no wish to expand their businesses. This is so because they are able to live fairly well from their earnings. It should thus not be overlooked that the Latin Americans also have their own criteria of quality of life (family, social gatherings, regional clubs, etc.) which might differ from traditional Western values.

Four out of five entrepreneurs have worked as wage workers before their self-employment, half of them in the formal sector, and the remainder in other micro and small-scale enterprises. A significant proportion of the sample entrepreneurs reported having started on their own in order to become more independent (in spite of frequently longer working hours).

Furthermore, they earned more now than as wage workers in the formal sector, and needless to say much more than paid workers in the informal sector.

Final reflexions and future perspectives

The co-existence of a formal and an informal sector, probably with a gray zone in between, can be explained in terms of constraints which do not apply equally to micro and small entrepreneurs in the same environment. These constraints concern, *inter alia*, differential access to markets for loans, raw materials, technology and outputs, as well as to relevant knowledge and skills. The seriousness of the constraints indicates how much scope exists for intervention.

Policies and programs to support the informal sector can be considered attempts to promote equity without ignoring the economic growth imperative.

Nevertheless, the prospects of better income opportunities for the growing number of newcomers who enter the informal sector are dim unless a gradual upgrading of the technological level in the micro and small-scale enterprises takes place. Technological change would impact on productivity and, hence, on prices and incomes. Further it would also enhance the quality of goods and services and thus stimulate more demand.

In this respect a broad definition of technology is applied, which encompasses not only production techniques but also tools and equipment, the skill of the work force, product design and quality, and the organization of production and marketing as a package.

It thus seems clear that it is necessary to enhance the demand for informal sector products and services. To a certain extent, such demand comes from within the informal sector itself, but a large proportion of informal sector output is consumed by individuals and households who derive their income from the modern and public sectors. There is also considerable scope for strengthening the access of informal enterprises to the markets of the modern sector through the development of subcontracting. One problem in this context, however, is that such subcontracting with large modern enterprises may easily take an exploitative character, and must thus be controlled in one way or another.

Altogether, it is not only a question of finding new markets, but the goods and services to be sold must also be attractive to new potential clienteles. All this often requires improved skills, consciousness of quality and adequate technology.

The unavoidable conclusion is the need for programs that are more consciously integrated with productive demands and practices, as well as specific training in management and business skills. Thus the school structure and curriculum should be revised in order to cover a wider range of knowledge which will prepare young people better for the social and economic challenges they will have to face later on. Although the Peruvian education system has been in a crisis for years as far as basic education and vocational training are concerned, our field survey confirms the high value traditionally attached to schooling as such in Peru. In short, schooling is regarded by the majority of the Peruvians regarded as the *sine qua non* for any progress and personal advancement. This attitude implies enormous scope for further potential influence by the Peruvian formal school system, although a serious substantial educational reform is required first. The schools should adapt their curricula and methods in order to meet the practical needs of the population. Hitherto the Peruvian school has been characterized by authoritarian didactic methods and structures, and repetitive methods of learning have been more widely applied than any creative methods.

Maybe the more or less non-formal training institutes which mushroom in Lima sometimes practice less authoritarian didactic methods. This is difficult to judge as they seem to have run out of any kind of control in the course of the last decade. Nevertheless, these private institutes often have better qualified teachers and instructors than their public counterparts because they are able to pay their staff considerably better.

The decreasing capacity of the modern formal labor market to absorb newcomers implies that the flow towards the informal labor market will continue. Thus it would be desirable that the various kinds of vocational training centers in Peru start to prepare for the future establishment of micro and small businesses.

We believe, moreover, that some entrepreneurial skills can be transferred successfully to the entrepreneurs if adequate training methods are adopted, whereas other skills depend on the entrepreneurs' personalities. Depending on the training methods and the environment, bearing specific cultural values and traditions in mind, there may be some potential scope for some personality development as well.

Nonetheless, it is evident, though not always to everybody, that there are limits to what training can do. Certain important competences needed by an entrepreneur are not taught in any training institute, but are rather part of the entrepreneur's personal character. Training itself does not create jobs, apart from those for trainers and support staff. Training itself is thus not necessarily the missing piece in the development puzzle. Interventions which address access to credit, technology, markets, and so on, are often more crucial for the survival and development of the informal sector (at least in the opinion of informal sector operators themselves). On the other hand, adequate training is to a large extent an instrument which causes other inputs to come to fulfillment.

One has to be cautious, however, not to over-romanticize the value of training in the informal sector. The quality of the training provided often depends largely on the skills of the »*maestro*« or »expert« at hand, and, of course, his ability to transfer them to the apprentices or training course participants.

In any kind of informal sector training, we believe that it is of utmost importance that the entrepreneurs should have a grounding in the real world (»applied knowledge«). The concern is not simply to initiate entrepreneurs into a field of knowledge (»pure theoretical knowledge«), but also to familiarize them with real world situations and encounters pertaining to entrepreneurs.

Concerning possible and viable intervention strategies in order to ultimately promote the informal sector, we would suggest three different strategies:

1) supporting informal apprenticeship

2) supporting informal trade and interest organizations

3) supporting local NGOs engaged in informal sector promotion.

As regards informal apprenticeship, it seems to us an impossible task to standardize this kind of apprenticeship in any way. The authorities do not intervene as a controlling body at any stage in the apprenticeship process, and apprenticeship itself varies widely, depending on the trade and the masters in charge. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to support this rather unstructured scheme of skill transfer in Peru where no formal apprenticeship is at hand. In view of the further expansion of the informal sector as such, on the one hand, and the great number of informal enterprises that make use of appropriate technologies, on the other, informal sector industrial units can thus be a seed-bed, training ground and outlet for future entrepreneurs. An intensive trade-specific consultation and follow-up of informal enterprises that take in apprentices could be a viable manner of support. Experienced and successful informal entrepreneurs (*maestros*) should be involved as practical advisers, rather than external experts who lack sufficient knowledge of the specific local problems of informal entrepreneurs.

As regards the second strategy, during recent years more and more micro and small entrepreneurs have started to organize into interest and/or trade organizations. Many of these associations have gained increasingly in influence, and are relatively close to their members and acquainted with their daily problems. Thus we deem such organizations to be one of the best cooperative partners for any intervention measures in the informal sector because we think the micro and small-scale entrepreneurs can best estimate their specific needs for support of any kind.

Concerning the third strategy, it should be borne in mind that the growth of the micro and small enterprise sector in Peru has been accompanied by the rise and growth of several institutions which offer different kinds of support: public, non-governmental, entrepreneurial trade associations, finance institutions, and higher education centers. Although the demand for support from this sector is big, the growth of institutions has caused dispersion and duplication of resources. Because of this many NGOs have now combined into a consortium of NGOs (COPEME) in order to cooperate and coordinate their support of micro and small enterprises. A very large number of these organizations have routinely targeted their courses and programs to focus on the importance of preparation, improvement or support for informal sector skills.

More than any other agencies and institutions, the NGOs have over recent years come to play a very strong role in the support and promotion of the informal sector. These promotion projects frequently put the emphasis on improved income rather than job creation.

In contrast to the formal or non-formal vocational training institutes, the NGOs have always had their closest links to the target group of the poor, who traditionally include the informal sector. The challenge in recent years, however, has been to re-orient their thinking to consider the meaning of individual success in micro-enterprises.

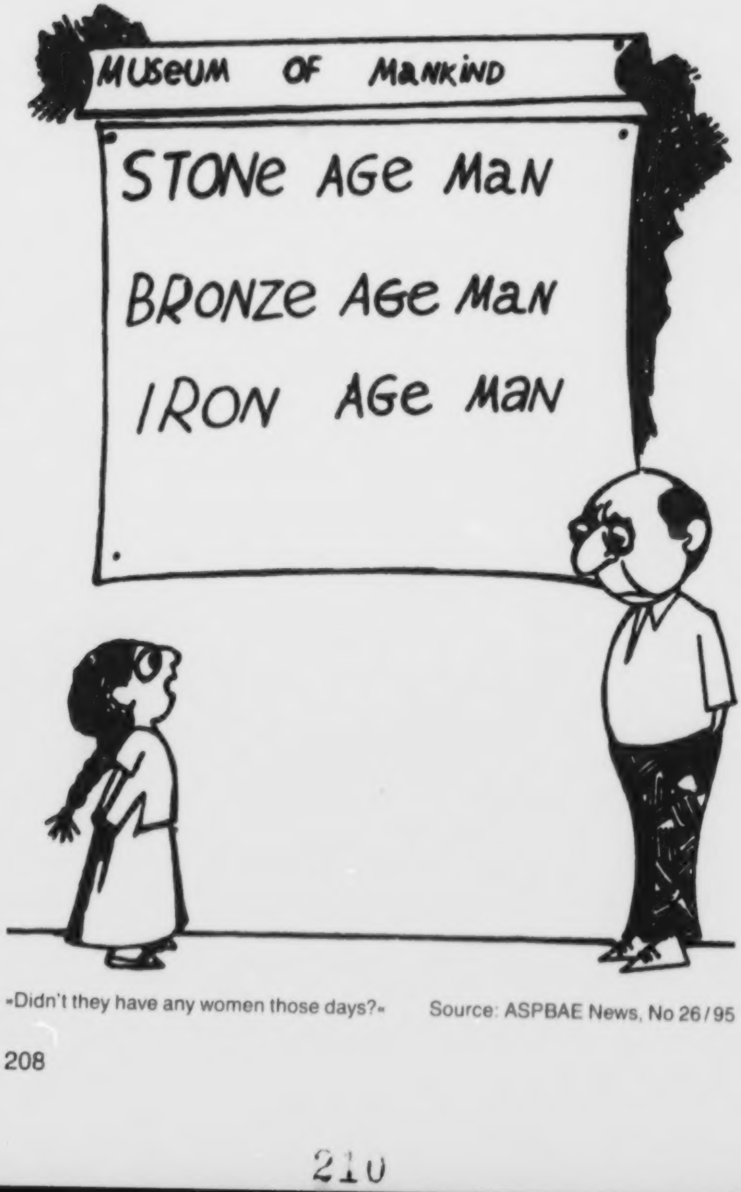
NGOs frequently provide their training opportunities very close to the working locations of the target group, and commonly employ experienced informal sector artisans as part-time instructors, an initiative that we applaud, as mentioned above. The NGOs further generally offer a wide spectrum of training for informal sector entrepreneurs, ranging from trade-specific technical skills to overall important management and business skills. Finally, they often take on the role of intermediaries in providing access to more or less formal loans.

Albeit on a very modest scale, our findings support the emphasis usually given to some of these training objectives directed towards micro and small-scale entrepreneurs in order to improve their chances in the market. On the other hand, frequently neglected training subjects such as teaching skills (probably because of the low priority assigned to informal enterprises as significant training »institutions«) and organization of production/work should increasingly be included in the promotion programs offered to informal entrepreneurs.

Finally, because most politicians in Peru — who ultimately decide the economic policy of the country — recognize the immense importance of the informal sector, and consider it to be a viable means of economic development in Peru for the years to come, fundamental political support for this sector may be expected.

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

LITERACY: OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES


MUSEUM OF MANKIND
STONE AGE MAN
BRONZE AGE MAN
IRON AGE MAN

»Didn't they have any women those days?«

Source: ASPBAE News, No 26/95

Patricia Herbert describes a successful income-generating project in Ghana. She shows which factors may play an important part in the success or failure of such projects and encourages others to follow this example. Patricia Herbert is a Literacy Consultant for GILLBT, P.O. Box 378, Tamale, Ghana.

Patricia Herbert

Can community projects sustain local literacy efforts? Experiences from Ghana

Sustaining literacy

There are many theories about literacy and approaches to its implementation but there is not enough interest in how to sustain it so that those who become literate continue to be literate and build on their literacy (Green, 1985). The term »sustain« in this paper, as applied to a literacy project, refers to the continuation of the process of change that has been started by the project. This involves knowing how to write primers and reading materials so that the reading and writing habit will continue in the community, recruiting and teaching new students, teachers and supervisors, maintaining and developing the infrastructure, networking with other interested parties such as government officials and NGOs, and finding the financial resources to maintain the project. Literacy per se does not usually generate income and so it is necessary to find projects that will provide sufficient income to support and sustain it.

The ideal, of course, is for a literacy project to be self-sustaining although this often seems an impossible dream. Literacy drives often take place among the illiterate, who are usually caught in the deprivation trap, characterised by poverty, isolation, powerlessness, vulnerability and physical weakness (Chambers, 1983). However, in striving to attain the impossible something is gained in the struggle. If a project is to be sustained, it is axiomatic that it has to be self-sustained because eventually the outsider will return to his or her home and external donors will stop donating owing to the fact that projects are never supported endlessly and resources for development in the world are generally dwindling: »The idea of putting big money into African economic development remains anathema« (Crocker cited in Decalo 1992:30).

When we consider the project being sustained by the local community involved in it, then we are thinking about self-reliance, resources coming from within the community and ownership of the project by the community. In this respect, literacy in the mother tongue is crucial in rooting the project in the local cultural context. It also ensures accessibility and benefits to all sections of the community. Given this, a community is more likely to allow its resources to be used for such a project and feel that it owns it.

Ownership implies control: he who pays the piper calls the tune. When projects are externally funded it is the external donor who assumes the right to demand that certain objectives are met and that the process of change is approached in a certain way: »Many donors have highly sophisticated approaches to project planning. While they may aim for target group participation, they are invariably geared at a donor-counterpart organizational level. Participative processes of communication, decision making and planning at the grassroots level need to be developed in order to let projects evolve from below« (OECD 1993:14).

The result of this can be that those at the grassroots level who are involved in the project do not own it at all, and therefore do not control it. They have to be accountable to the external donor for all that is done and how the money is spent. Culturally acceptable approaches are in jeopardy and the freedom to make decisions may be lost unless, of course, the external donor is open to input from the grassroots and does not assume a top-down, West-knows-best approach: »...policies and programs will come to naught if those who implement them do not believe in them, or do not regard them as their own« (Helleiner 1992:772).

If the local people themselves can finance the project, perhaps not at the beginning, but as the project progresses, then they will actually own and therefore control it. There will thus be a real possibility that the project can be sustained.

If the project is to benefit the community not only in the present but in the future, there is a great deal in a literacy project that has to be sustained:

- an infrastructure of classes, teachers and supervisors
- training courses for teachers and supervisors
- materials (books, newspapers and other materials)
- equipment (typewriters, duplicators and other equipment)

- motor-bikes and bicycles for supervisory trips maintained and fuelled
- buildings maintained
- hospitality resources for hosting public relations visits
- salaries or equivalent for full time workers such as senior staff.

Some may argue that voluntaryism is the true indicator of whether the project can be sustained and literacy become a value. Values influence attitudes and decisions: when the authority-bearers, the elders, in a traditional community see that literacy is important for the well-being of that community, they will ensure that financial and human resources are expended to that end. But, without this, voluntaryism can be sporadic and when momentum has to be sustained it is advisable to have at least one or two people paid to give full time supervision of the project until literacy has become a value (Gustafsson 1991). Literacy projects in northern Ghana have demonstrated that many people are willing to teach or supervise voluntarily three or four times a week, but that the senior supervisors, who organise much of the work and work full time, need to be paid so that they can hire labourers to work on their farms. In an agricultural society, this is essential (personal experience). Therefore, the question arises: where is the local funding to come from? Projects specially set up to support literacy financially may be the answer.

In his book »Can Literacy lead to Development?« Gustafsson describes his own experiences in trying to develop projects in India that financially support literacy. These range from sheep farming to carpentry and are described by Cairns in the foreword as »...income-generating projects, which offered a reasonable chance for long-term financial self-sufficiency« (Gustafsson 1991:xi). Expectations from such projects can be extremely high, as is shown by one example of an income-generating project proposal written at a community development workshop in Ghana: »The project will not only help people out of illiteracy, but also poverty, ignorance and diseases may be reduced« (Wood 1990:30).

Time will tell whether these income-generating projects (IGPs) will fulfil their purpose of providing financial self-sufficiency. In Gustafsson's work in India, the first one was set up to support literacy in 1987, and he estimated that by the year 1995 enough income would be generated from the IGPs to make the literacy project self-sufficient (Gustafsson 1991:146).

The choice of an IGP that is culturally acceptable and beneficial to the members of the community who are involved in the literacy project is not an easy one, and it should be made by them not an outside agency. They will need help financially to initiate it but this has to be done in such a way that pride and self-respect are maintained. An early indicator of whether an IGP can be sustained is the amounts of labour, materials, people and money that are contributed locally and will supplement the outside funding: »Self-sustaining, self-reliant development will never be achieved through giving people donations« (Burkey, 1993:193-4). Therefore it is better if the money is not given but loaned with a realistic loan repayment contract worked out between the community and the funding agency.

Selecting an Income-Generating Project (IGP)

The problem is always — what kind of project lends itself to the IGP concept? It must be one that is culturally acceptable. For example, it is unacceptable to introduce pig farming to a Muslim community. It must be possible to start the project with not too much financial outlay as there are more opportunities to get small loans rather than large ones. The IGP must not require a large staff to operate it as this will drain its funds. If a high degree of technology is involved this will be difficult to maintain and will be expensive. The loan repayment contract with the donor agency must be well thought out so that the money is repaid in a way that will not cripple the project. Not only must the IGP sustain itself but the literacy project as well.

These problems emerged clearly from experiences in a community-based literacy project in northern Ghana. The community began to look for ways to sustain literacy in the local language, Deg (people - Dega), with outside help. The search was to pass through a number of failures before finding a project that was both self-sustaining and income-generating for the literacy effort.

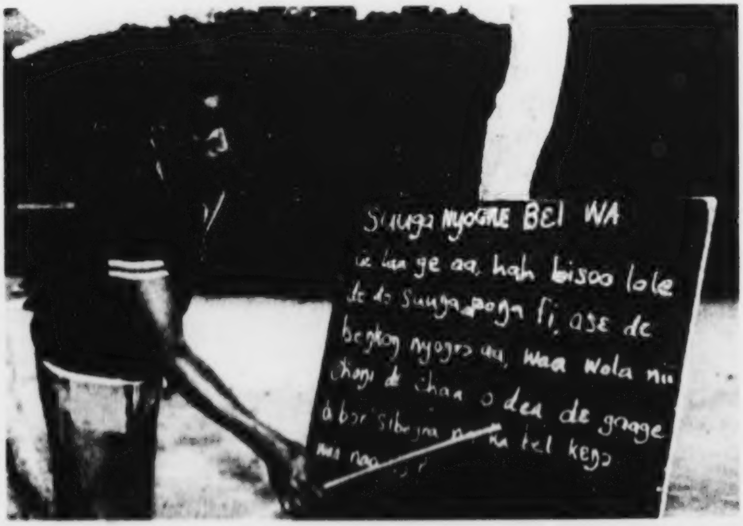
Such income is relative to the economy of the country about which we are talking. The amounts of money generated in the projects in Ghana at the village level are small, but taken in their economic context they can make a significant difference to a small project.

The Deg experience

Illiteracy among the Dega is estimated at 80%. They live chiefly in approximately 45 villages straddling the northern and southern banks of the Black Volta river, which bounds the Northern and Brong-Ahafo regions of north-western Ghana. The main centre for their mother-tongue literacy drive is the village of New Longoro and it is facilitated by the Deg Language Project. The latter, a non-governmental organization (NGO), was initiated in 1981 by a team of Ghanaians and expatriates and funding for the books, equipment, training and salaries came partly from the local community and partly from outside the country. Knowing that one day the external funding would cease, the team sought other ways of generating money so that the literacy project could continue. Several different projects were attempted: corn storage, duck breeding, and honey production.

Corn storage

A Deg literacy supervisor attended a community development workshop and returned to the area full of what he had learned about IGPs. Armed with this new knowledge and having discussed ideas with the rest of the team, he wrote a proposal to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) asking for funding for a corn storage project. This consisted of buying corn during the cheap season, storing it and selling it in the peak, expensive season, a business that was already operating in other areas. Without such enterprises there would be a lack of corn during the rainy season. However, the cost of travelling to other areas to buy the corn made it an expensive commodity for local people. It appeared then, that a Deg corn storage project could meet a community



Ibrahim, previously illiterate, now a voluntary teacher in the Deg project, Northern Ghana.
Photo: P. Herbert

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need and generate money for literacy. A feasibility study had been worked out by the team and negotiations involving CIDA were made through a mediating organisation in Ghana. The project was loaned 450.000 cedis (US$ 1.200). The cedi-US dollar rate at that time was approximately 360 cedis = US$ 1. The condition for repayment was that the loan should be repaid at the rate of 105.000 cedis (US$ 292) per year for four years. The loan repayment scheme, though agreed upon by the team, was accepted without realising the full implications.

There was much to learn about a corn storage project. If the corn was not stored properly the insects took over. If the market was not studied carefully and the corn was bought and sold at the wrong time, a great deal of money could be lost. Apart from the actual buying and selling transactions there were extraneous costs, e.g., a tax on sales, lorries hired for transportation, women hired to sell the corn, sacks to be bought and other expenses.

An example of the progress of the corn storage project is the record of income for the year 1993/1994. It was 315.300 cedis (US$ 525.5) and the expenditure was 312,300 cedis (US$ 520.5). The cedi-US dollar rate had doubled! It must be remembered that the bulk of the expenditure was the cost of buying corn for the next year, 1994/1995. In the learning process mistakes have been made so that after six years fewer bags of corn are being bought. In 1988, 50 bags of corn were purchased, and in the year 1993/1994 it was only 13 bags. There is still 25% of the loan to be paid and no money has gone into the literacy project.

Duck breeding

The expatriates in the team had reared about 30 ducks and, having worked out a feasibility study on the rate of increase, contributed these as an IGP in 1989. Although the ducks were given free they had to be fed and it became apparent that to keep them in captivity a great deal of corn and fish dust had to be bought, someone employed to look after them, and a woman employed to bring water in the dry season. Some of the ducks were sold, but the market for them was to be found in the urban rather than in the rural areas. Transporting the ducks to urban areas created more costs and it took time to find buyers. Foreign ducks were added to the local ones being bred, and, being big and fat and reaching maturity more quickly than the local ducks, aroused a lot of interest among the Dega. They would have sold well, but they could not hatch their eggs because they were not the parent stock and had only been bred for the table. Also, though local ducks bred by villagers did not seem to die often of disease, even though they were left to scavenge around the village for food, in captivity they died of varying diseases unless kept very hygienically. The ducklings were plentiful, but hard work to keep alive, and the snakes liked the eggs, killing the sitting mothers to get them.

By the year 1992/1993 the total income from the duck project was 11.000 cedis (US$ 22) and the expenditure was 13.400 cedis (US$ 26.8). The cedi-US$ rate was approximately 500 cedis to the $. Thus, rather than sustaining the literacy project, the duck project was draining it!

Honey production

In 1989 some of the team happened to hear about the potential financial gain in bee-keeping and were shown how to harvest the honey and what materials were necessary. Armed with a copy of »The Golden Insect« by S. Adjare, they went back to the Deg area and discussed the possibility of such a project. Together with protective clothing and a smoker, two hives were bought, baited, set up in appropriate places and after a few months colonised by bees. This was paid for by revenue gained from selling literacy materials.

In this instance the literacy programme actually financed a project instead of the other way round!

Once the fear of being stung had been conquered, harvesting techniques mastered and the right season ascertained, it became obvious that this was indeed the golden insect! Honey is a necessary ingredient in medicines such as cough syrup, and high prices could be commanded. The demand for this pure honey, which was extracted hygienically (as opposed to the local harvesting of honey by burning the nests), was mainly in the big towns. Whereas with the marketing of the ducks, a large amount were not sold at any one time, just ones and twos, the honey was harvested at one particular season and sold in bulk so that many trips to the urban areas were not needed.

Income from the honey production project as recorded for the year 1992/1993 was 56,000 cedis (US$112). The expenses were few as friends transported and sold the honey. The money was mostly used to buy more hives and the 1994 harvest generated $265. Some of this money has been used in the literacy project to finance teacher training courses, development seminars, and the maintenance of the literacy supervisor's motorbike. Yes, here at last was a project with potential, although many more hives need to be set up before it may be felt that this is the answer to financing the literacy work.

However, there are dangers. Bees will not tolerate ants in the hive and if they get in, the bees will leave the ants to eat the honey. Goats sometimes knock the hives over if the latter are not well set up. When it is time to burn the grass in the dry season, unless the grass is well cut around the hive area the hives may well be burned. This has already happened.

All these projects needed a project manager, who is a key person. Unless he is well motivated, trained and honest, it does not matter how much potential the project has, and it will fail to generate income. At the beginning the IGP manager worked voluntarily, but as the work increased, he had to be paid because precious time was being taken from his farming, which was his family's chief source of food. Where was this money to come from? It was hoped that eventually it would be paid out of the returns gained from a good IGP. In the meantime he was funded by an outside donor.

Outside printing

Finally, the team made a most significant discovery. When they looked at their account book carefully to see how much money was being fed into the literacy project, they noticed that a small but regular amount of income was being recorded every month. This income was derived from printing services, such as typing and

	Outside printing Income in cedis	*Stationery Expenses in cedis*
August	2,000	—
September	4,000	100
October	11,000	5,360
November	2,600	5,200
December	—	—
January	4,100	—
February	16,000	—
March	6,000	1,500
April	8,500	4,900
May	12,500	—
June	7,100	4,800
Totals	74,000	19,860

Income from Outside Printing = US$ 148
Expenses for Stationery = US$ 39,72

duplicating, rendered by the Deg team to the community. Although expenses were not recorded as it was not really considered a proper project, it may be assumed that the major expenses came from buying typing and duplicating paper, therefore what was spent on stationery would be significant in determining how much income was actually coming in from this source. It was called Outside Printing in the account book and the accounts from August 1992 to June 1993 revealed the picture (see page 11).

Of course it has to be noted that the buying of duplicating ink is not recorded. Set against that is that the stationery bought was not just for Outside Printing but for letters and other business connected with the literacy project. Also, what is recorded is only one third of the income from Outside Printing, i.e., only that which was going into the literacy project — the rest went to the operators and the machine fund. But this was not coming from any of the IGPs on which the team had been focusing. It was actually a by-product of the literacy project!

When the literacy project was set up, duplicators, typewriters, an electronic stencil cutter and a guillotine for cutting paper were acquired. These had been used for literacy materials for the classes. However, it became apparent that the local community had other needs which could be met by the typists in the team in their spare time:

- local school teachers wanted exam papers typed and duplicated
- schoolchildren wanted their exam results typed out neatly
- those applying for jobs wanted letters of application and testimonials typed
- funeral notices and invitations to relatives in surrounding villages needed to be typed and duplicated
- notices of future meetings for those in the traditional and the educated sector needed typing and duplicating.

Wilford Opoku, IGP project manager, beginning to bait one of the hives in the honey project.
Photo: P. Herbert

For these services a fee was charged, which was divided into thirds:

- one third for the operators
- one third for the maintenance of the machinery, and
- one third for the literacy project.

Lessons learned

In other words, a printing service or, as it is commonly called in Ghana, a local rural press, had developed slowly but surely into a viable IGP. What was to be learned from this? What was the secret of its success? The following factors give some indication:

- it arose out of the needs of the community
- it started small and gradually grew
- the people operating it received some financial benefit as well as the project
- it provided a regular, steady income for the operators in a society which finds the salary at the end of the month something which can be disposed of very quickly and does not last the next month
- it was the only printing service in the area
- it was providing a small but sure income for the literacy project.

This contrasts with the seeming failure of the corn storage and the duck breeding projects. However, significant lessons can be learned from these failures. In the corn storage project:

- the amount of money required for the loan repayment scheme was too high, so that the capital given to buy corn was gradually eroded even though there were some good years of selling the corn at a profitable rate

- some of the mistakes made were very costly, e.g., on one occasion the season's bags of corn were bought at a certain place, but, because they were not checked properly, someone took advantage and ten bags were missing when the corn arrived in the project area.

The duck breeding project ran up against a number of problems, most of which were the results of culturally different methods of breeding and keeping livestock:

- the ducks were not reared originally by the local community
- it was not culturally appropriate to rear ducks or any animals in captivity
- it was also not culturally appropriate to give animals much extra food; they were allowed to scavenge in the village
- while ducks are reared in the locality, they are not eaten very much so that there is not a big local market for them
- ducks are considered dirty creatures because of their faeces
- there are certain fears about ducks looking like snakes because of their long necks.

An emerging strategy for choosing an IGP to sustain a literacy project

By looking at the successful factors in the Deg experience it is possible to see some indicators that point to the potential viability of an IGP to sustain a literacy project. The honey production project started small with only two hives, and expanded to four and then six hives, which were reduced when one was burned. Being small, it was comparatively inexpensive and simple in that once there was a hive to copy, local carpenters made the hives and, if the bee-suits were ever spoiled, local tailors could make new ones. Only three people were required to harvest the honey and the staff were available from the literacy project; two senior literacy supervisors and the IGP manager. The harvesting technique was not such that it required a lot of expensive training. Therefore to start small and simply is a good indicator.

The Deg team have now discovered an organisation which will buy the honey wholesale if they transport it to Tamale, the capital of the north. This will mean one trip to Tamale per year and a sure market. This is a major indicator of a project's viability for if there is not a market for what the project offers, then it cannot be sustained.

The honey production project needs to expand further to be able to sustain itself and the literacy project. A Ghanaian bee-keeper told the team that the project needs at least 20 hives to make a good income. External funding has been promised so that more hives can be made.

One of the key factors in the outside printing services was that the Deg team were meeting some community needs. Finding out what the needs of the community are sounds very easy, but, in fact, other factors have to be taken into consideration: expense and complexity. The provision of good drinking water would have met a health need for the Deg communities, but it was far too expensive and complex a venture for a village team to contemplate. The printing services project was inexpensive in that it was a by-product of the literacy project: the typewriters, duplicators and other equipment were there and extra staff did not have to be employed. It was uncomplicated: new skills and training were not needed as the literacy staff already knew how to operate the machinery and an office was already in place. So inexpensiveness is a good indicator and, once again, simplicity.

Another indicator of the viability of an IGP is: who benefits? At the beginning of the literacy project it had been recognised that in their spare time the Deg team would do the occasional bit of typing for someone. First of all it was done without payment and then, as more people asked for help, payment was worked out so that the operators gained something and the literacy project also gained something. It was never envisaged that this would amount to much. However, by looking at the account book it was evident that the beneficiaries were multiple:

- the clients
- the operators
- the literacy project, therefore the literacy students, teachers and supervisors, and
- the maintenance of the machinery.

It was clear that the steady trickle of income was helping the operators in their daily bills and this gave impetus to the sustaining of the printing services project. They developed it according to the way that suited them, making decisions and choices that suited the community, e.g., establishing prices that were reasonable within the society in which they lived. In fact, they owned and therefore controlled the project.

What was sought was a project that was both self-sustaining and income-generating for the literacy project and, although it has proved difficult, it has not ended in failure but with two real possibilities. The honey production project certainly has much potential and the printing services project is already providing day-to-day funds for some aspects of literacy. Some general factors of success can be seen from these two projects that give guidance in choosing an IGP to sustain a literacy project.

Of course there are factors that need further investigation. How is it possible to ascertain the amount of help the project needs from outside and how much from the locality, so that initiative is not stifled?

What kind of manager is needed for such a project and how should he or she be trained? A comparatively small section of the community was involved in decision making in these projects: how can the wider community be involved?

A great deal of money, time and effort are wasted on literacy when it is a one-off effort without any consideration given to its being locally sustained. As has been shown by the Deg experience, it is possible to find ways of generating income, once a literacy project has been started. Admittedly this was in a stable socio-political environment and a specific cultural context, which may not apply to other contexts. However, it may provide some indicators that can be used to stimulate ideas for other literacy projects so that those caught in the »deprivation trap« may struggle free.

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Work on site often looks rather different from what was planned in theory. Anna Robinson-Pant made this discovery during her period as a teacher trainer in Nepal. She stresses the importance of the cultural and social context of literacy, and emphasizes the need to have equal regard to spoken and written language, and above all not only to learn to write and speak correctly, but also to use the appropriate form of communication in a given situation. Anna Robinson-Pant has spent a number of periods working as an adult educator for different development aid organizations in Nepal.

Anna Robinson-Pant

Literacy and language: reflections on my own experiences in Nepal

In 1985 I went to Nepal to work as a teacher trainer in a remote region of the country. As well as learning from my role in training literacy facilitators and writing literacy materials, the experience of becoming literate in another language and of living in communities where the printed word was less in evidence, made me question my own assumptions about literacy and literacy learning. As I continue to work in the field of literacy, I now realise how significant this experience was as a starting point for exploring how different cultures shape and give varying meanings to **literacy**. Over the past year, I have been involved in academic research on literacy and have suddenly had the opportunity to put my personal experiences into a wider context. Reading ethnographic accounts of literacy practices in different parts of the world, I have been continually struck by similarities with my own experiences in rural Nepal and felt the need to make connections between my personal and academic interest in literacy. The new literacy studies of the 1980s have paved the way for researchers to »recognise the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts« (Street, 1993:7) and to study these »social practices rather than literacy-in-itself« (ibid.). It is in this context that I thought it would be useful to reflect on my experiences in Nepal, as a process of learning about my own and other peoples' literacy practices. Although this account may appear to focus on the personal, individual side of my experiences, I hope that by showing the close parallels with other ethnographic accounts of literacy, I will demonstrate the value of bringing together the personal and the academic.

I received my job description for the post of VSO[1] teacher trainer whilst still in the UK. I was to work with the Seti Project, a government pilot project aiming to make education more relevant and accessible to children and adults in the remote Far Western region of Nepal. Consisting of thirty typewritten pages, the job description was somewhat daunting: I was supposed to be training primary teachers and literacy facilitators, not just in how to teach reading and writing, but in how to construct latrines, plant fruit trees and make blackboards. Almost in parentheses was the assumption that I would become fluent in Nepali, both spoken and written, after a six week intensive language course. Surprisingly, I too was more concerned about how to become an expert in latrine construction than about how I would acquire the necessary literacy skills. To my relief, I soon discovered on arrival in Nepal, that the concept of a written job description is a Western one and that since no one (apart from the other VSO volunteer) had a copy, I was free to fit into the project according to the skills I could offer.

Learning Nepali in a language school in Kathmandu was a good introduction to the kinds of teaching methods I was to encounter in the village schools. We learnt the letters of the alphabet by rote — many hours were spent reciting the sounds after the teacher and practising writing the letters. Despite the boredom of the lessons, there was the excitement of suddenly finding you could read the signboards on the cycle ride home, or even catch a bus and know its destination. I left the language school being able to read and write simple words and conjugate verbs, but even basic conversation posed a real problem.

When I reached the project where I was to work for two years, I discovered that the language spoken locally was completely different from the »pure« Nepali) I had learnt in Kathmandu. The project staff (mostly educated in Kathmandu) could understand me but the local women just laughed. I had to start learning the language again — but this time there was no textbook, it was just a question of listening and imitating. Some of my colleagues were horrified — the local language was considered vulgar, unrefined Nepali, and they prided themselves on not being able to understand it. For the first few months, I based myself at the local school and taught English to the upper grades. When I wasn't teaching, I sat in the grade one primary class and practised reading the textbook.

Teaching English to classes of eighty crammed into a dark room forced me to question my pedagogic assumptions and to change my own teaching methods. Coming from a child-centred approach to primary teaching in the UK, I expected to be able to plan individual programmes of work, to relate to students on a one-to-one basis, both in written and oral interaction. There was however no way that I could regularly see or mark eighty students' books per class or manage to speak to individuals. I had to change my methods: the kind of written work that I now set was quite formal and directed — either right or wrong — so that answers could be written on the blackboard. I also began to adopt the chanting methods I saw used in the classrooms all around me — with eighty students, individual questions were impractical and everyone could at least participate if exercises were recited en masse. Eventually I experimented with group teaching but I often reflected on how closely my lessons mirrored those of the language school in Kathmandu. It was partly due to the demands of the textbook and the examination (all centrally determined) which meant that there was little room for creative language work or an alternative teaching approach. The experience of teaching large classes was thus invaluable for me to understand the constraints teachers would face in trying to encourage a more participatory Western style of education, such as our project was trying to introduce. The Seti Project aimed to encourage group activities, more experiential learning through practical work and the use of visual aids. In implementing these ideas, the teachers faced physical constraints such as small, cramped rooms and large numbers of students; but the social obstacles, such as the students' and other teachers' expectations, were perhaps harder to deal with.

During my time at the school, I noticed that the students had nothing to read other than their subject textbooks. There were no posters or students' work on the walls and no other reading materials. When I mentioned this to the staff, they were surprised: there was apparently a school library. The Head took me to see it — a cupboard of books donated by a foreign aid agency — only opened for the occasional visitor to view. A radio-cassette recorder from UNICEF and a set of science materials had suffered the same fate. Books and equipment were in such short supply, they would not last long if actually used by students. When I experimented with putting students' work on the wall, I could see the problems faced: invariably the papers would have disappeared by the next lesson. It was partly that the wind blew through the glass-less windows and that it is difficult to attach paper to mud, but more due to the students who did not share my concept of displaying written work and »stole« each other's papers.

The high point of the school year was Education Day and I was asked to be a speaker at the »cultural event« held outside in the school grounds. The headmaster made it clear that I was to speak in English, not Nepali, and that I was being invited to speak as the only woman member of staff — »to show the value of education for girls«. I found this reason rather ironic, knowing that his own daughters were not allowed to attend school. The event was typical of other celebrations (such as the King's Birthday and Democracy Day), consisting of crowds of people from the neighbouring villages descending on the school. Apart from singing and music, there was a great emphasis on oratory — I was only one out of about forty speakers, many of whom had not been invited to speak but spontaneously rose to the occasion. Despite my limited Nepali, I soon realised that the stress was far more on **how** something was said, than on **what** was said and that the speakers all used a high form of Nepali, far removed from everyday speech (let alone the local language). Unlike me, none of the speakers had written their speeches — rather, the skill lay in the fact that they could compose orally without written prompts (some of the speakers in any case could not read and write). The complexity of the language could sometimes be used to the speaker's advantage: on Democracy Day, the deputy headmaster disappeared into police custody after it appeared that he had criticised the King by suggesting that democracy had not yet been achieved. Three days later he reappeared at school, having convinced the authorities that they had »misunderstood« his speech.

This occasion made me question some of my assumptions about oral and written ways of communicating. When I had been asked to give a speech, my aim was to get my message across in the clearest possible way and my first step was to prepare notes. My colleagues, by contrast, had for years been familiar with the local conventions of speech making so saw themselves as trying to fit within this tradition. My experiences could be compared to Kulick and Stroud's ethnographic account of the formal structures and functions of speech making in a Papua New Guinean village: »the specific points made by speakers in their speeches are not as important as the creation of a general feeling of agreement« (1993: 45).

I found that, as with speech making, my Nepali friends had contrasting ideas about letter writing. Letters written by my colleagues consisted mostly of set greetings repeated to each member of the family and had more lyrical phrases for ending, such as »my pen is telling me to stop«. My letters seemed odd to them — like descriptions, essay writing, with little space for greetings. My friends' expectations regarding the social function of letters relates closely to Besnier's research findings about the purpose of letter writing for the Nukulaelae Islanders in the Central Pacific. Whilst an outsider might have imagined that the Nukulaelae wrote to people off the atoll for purely practical or economic reasons, the primary function of their letters, Besnier discovered, was »to reaffirm social bonds« and they contained a strong »affective component« (1993:70). Bloch's description of letters in the Zafimaniry village he studied could also be compared with the kind of letters I described above: »after a lengthy and totally fixed section of the 'how are you' kind of exchange, (the returnee) gives a standardised account of what she has done during her absence« (1993:104).

The assumption that my letter would be written and read in private, was perhaps the greatest difference between me and my colleagues. I found it so difficult to get used to people looking over my shoulder as I wrote, with no embarrassment at the fact they were reading a letter to someone else. I was amazed how colleagues would open and read their friends' letters before they arrived at the office. My ideas of privacy, especially in regard to print, were completely overturned — and this also applied to official letters. Later, when I was working in Kathmandu and had to chase documents around various Ministry offices to process volunteers' visas, it was frequently suggested to me (by the Ministry staff) that I should read through the papers on the clerks' desks until I found out what was happening with mine. I could then speed up the process by physically moving the paper on to the next desk.

During my time in the Far West region of Nepal, I found that my own »private« notions about print could become a great source of support. After a period spent teaching in the school, I joined a team of trainers moving from one village to another, helping literacy facilitators and primary school teachers. We were often on the move for two months at a time, meaning that during this period we stayed with local teachers or families of facilitators and never — even when sleeping — had a moment alone. I found this lack of privacy one of the hardest things to get used to. However I soon discovered that even when surrounded by people (often staring at me as I wrote), I could »escape« for half an hour or so simply by writing a letter or my diary. I sometimes used reading in the same way, though as we had to carry all the clothes, medicines and equipment we would need for two months, I was loath to add more than one book to the weight of my rucksack.

As we travelled from village to village, we often carried letters for teachers and shopkeepers. Particularly if we were going to another district, married women would want to send a letter to their maternal homes. Carrying money was another function either between the project offices or to run training courses. Writing a cheque to pay for salaries was out of the question so we would have to carry great packets of paper notes. Money took on a less abstract meaning when you couldn't just write the figure. Watching a helicopter land next to the district bank and drop heaps of notes onto the grass meant everyone had actually seen the month's remittance. Another surprise for me was that there were no maps of the area — before I arrived in the district, I just could not imagine how I was going to find my way around from village to village. Of course, I was forced to abandon my dependence on maps and find the route by continually asking directions along the many trails.

Working as a foreigner alongside Nepali trainers brought many opportunities to discuss our different literacy practices. After each field trip (i.e. the two months spent on the move), we were expected to write a report for the central office. At first there was no set format, but because staff were producing such reams of paper after each visit, the head of the project (also British) asked whether I could »teach« my colleagues to write »proper« reports. Their reports were in both Nepali and English: the Nepali section tended to be a very factual list of schools visited and supervision conducted, whereas the English section read like a personal diary. Every day was described in detail, but with as much attention given to the social side (meals consumed, tea parties attended, conversations with friends) as to the professional observations. I realise now that this might have reflected my colleagues' ideas about how letters are written in English. Nepali friends could not understand why personal asides sometimes appear in an official letter in English (such as, »hope you are now recovered«) and they were at a loss for how to respond. Hence, it could be a natural assumption that official reports in English, as opposed to Nepali, should follow the pattern of English official letters by consisting of a mixture of personal asides and business. When I suggested to my colleagues that perhaps they should just write a more concise version of their field report in English, as the Nepali section already was, they were quite affronted and could not see the reasoning. I eventually understood that they valued writing a fuller account of their experiences and after the report had been reduced to a set format, two colleagues started to keep a personal diary of events in English.

In my second year at the Seti Project, I was asked to join the team writing literacy materials in the Nepali language for a girls' literacy programme. As I was still struggling with the language, I was not keen to do this but since there was no Nepali woman of degree standard in the project, there was apparently no one else eligible. I worked with the two young trainers, Manisha and Geeta. Both girls came from the local area and had gained the school leaving certificate before joining the project. As it turned out, because I was a foreigner and a »neo-literate« in Nepali, I could play a valuable role by pointing out the subtleties of the language which they no longer noticed: for example, a slightly different conjugation of a verb or when they interchanged two completely different ways of writing a certain letter. The process introduced me to the literacy of development agencies: we had to begin by selecting key words (such as diarrhoea, fruit, education, marriage) which gradually made up the letters of the alphabet. We then wrote stories — all with a strong development message — around these key words.

For the final stage, we went to Kathmandu to meet with an expert in the Education Ministry. She insisted that all words in the local dialect should be removed as the young girls might think they were »pure« Nepali if they learnt them in class. The debates we then had around which language to use revolved around issues I have later read about in documents such as the »Guidelines for a literacy and language policy« (Education for Development, 1993). »The ever-changing relationship between different languages and literacies, including their relative prestige and current resourcing« and »the balance between diversification and unification in the nation« (ibid.) were tensions that lay beneath our discussions, but were not at this time recognised as policy decisions. Since the restoration of democracy in 1990, the Nepali Government has, however, addressed the issue that only 58.4% of the population have Nepali as their mother tongue (Manandhar, 1993) and is promoting the use of other vernacular languages in literacy classes and schools. Interestingly, the local Seti project trainers with whom I worked in the eighties felt strongly even then that local words should be retained in their stories (perhaps because they had worked extensively with the young girls themselves) and the literacy materials we wrote were not changed to »pure« Nepali until they were later piloted on a national basis. The pictures, drawn by a local artist, were also kept in their original form until produced nationally.

When we finished the first draft of the literacy course, Geeta and I had to leave the headquarters to start a training course in the next district, so we asked Manisha to try out the materials on her own with a class she was teaching nearby. Unfortunately, this stage was never completed as our other colleagues decided that the materials were fine as they stood — the idea of drafting, piloting then rewriting had been mine and previous literacy primers had simply been written and published. I was furious when we returned and found out that the materials had already been sent to the printers, but I realised it was considered almost a slight on our abilities as writers to suggest that stories should be redrafted. I have since come across this idea of redrafting being unnecessary in many differing contexts and see it as one of the practices distinguishing »academic literacy« (Street, 1994) from »everyday writing« (Barton, 1991). Fishman writing about the Amish Community, an Anabaptist group in the USA, relates the concept of redrafting to religious beliefs: »there was no concept of multiple drafts (of newspaper articles) ... time spent rewriting things is wasted time« (Fishman, 1991: 33).

After leaving the Seti Project in the Far West, I worked with ActionAid[2] at their London headquarters. During this time, I was expected to train the Nepali field staff in how to write reports and plans. I learnt a lot about the expectations of aid agencies with regard to Western models of planning and reporting. Armed with a manual explaining the differences between aims, objectives and strategies, I attempted to mould my Nepali colleagues' accounts of what they were going to do in the following year into the accepted format in English. Not surprisingly, what they actually did and what were written in their annual plans, did not often coincide. Similarly inappropriate models of literacy were carried by the Nepali staff into the field, as they distributed hundreds of agricultural diaries giving hints about soil preparation and new crop varieties, to barely literate farmers.

In my most recent job as VSO field officer, I was based in Kathmandu and responsible for about sixty British volunteers working in various sectors around Nepal. At first I found I had to relearn the language as I could communicate effectively in a village context, but did not have the vocabulary or polite forms to participate in conversations at Ministry level. I could hardly read a word of the official forms we had to fill in to request a volunteer's visa: the register — like that of the daily newspapers and the radio — was extremely formal and Sanskritised with certain phrases that were never heard in everyday speech. My role as adviser to volunteers who were adapting to a new culture gave me many insights into how differently office colleagues communicate in the UK.

Education volunteers would be frustrated by not being able to find out what was happening in their project offices: there was no notice board of events and no apparent staff meetings. Whilst some volunteers reacted by setting up a notice board »to improve communications« or started a project newsletter, others began to realise that information was spread informally — decisions were taken on the spot during the apparently endless hours that their colleagues spent chatting over tea. Occasionally spontaneous meetings were held, but without a written agenda and nobody took notes. Some of the written conventions of a Nepali office — that everyone should sign in the register on arrival — were resisted by British volunteers as being »too like school«. Yet if they did not participate in this »literacy event« (Barton, 1991:1), they were often regarded as completely outside the office system — not just because they didn't fill in their names, but because they were not part of the cluster of people exchanging greetings round the register. The fact that volunteers rejected some literacy practices (such as the register signing) yet wanted to initiate others (the notice board) indicates how far these literacy events need to be seen as »social practices involving the roles people take, the networks they are part of, and the values and attitudes they hold« (ibid.).

One of the hardest things for the volunteers to learn was not so much the written conventions, but the ways of negotiating, discussing, requesting in spoken language. Western volunteers were often regarded as very direct in their spoken language: they voiced criticisms openly, got angry easily and even made direct requests to their superiors. I myself was lucky enough to have Nepali friends who could explain the subtle differences in communication: I learnt to approach requests or to find out information in a roundabout way. For example, with the Under Secretary of the Education Ministry, it was quite customary to spend over half the time exchanging greetings and general conversation before dropping almost as an aside, the request that he could look into the issue of why a certain volunteer had not yet received clearance to start work. Although I had never been aware of having to develop oral skills for a specific purpose until working in this formal and hierarchical structure, I now wonder whether it is just that I was more **conscious** of learning these oral skills because it was an unfamiliar culture.

Quite apart from learning how to get things done, I have developed a deeper understanding of the power of the oral from living in Nepal. A moment that stands out in my memory is a night I spent with a young woman who ran a shop in one of the more remote mountain villages. She was unusual in that she had continued the business after her husband migrated to India for work and she chose to live alone. Just as we were preparing to sleep in a small room above the shop, she noticed that her two chickens had disappeared. She was devastated — they were not just her source of eggs, but her companions and she spoke of them as if she had lost her closest friends. As the night wore on, there was still no sign of them. I suggested that we could go and ask the neighbours if they had seen them, but she was convinced her in-laws had stolen them and were at this very minute eating them — to punish her for living alone on the other side of the village from them. Suddenly she ran out of the house, climbed up on top of the wall and stood up facing towards the village. In the moonlight, she began to shout curses — not addressing her in-laws directly but »the one who has taken the chickens«. The Gods' names echoed round the village again and again as she lamented her loss. I pleaded with her to come down but she ignored me. She continued shouting for about an hour then got down, came inside and went to bed. After that, everything continued as normal but the chickens never came back.

This incident was so dramatic (in the true sense of the word) and so unexpected that it introduced me to another way of dealing with great emotions: it was so much more powerful than simply crying. The woman had been able to express her feelings whilst also (as I later discovered) placing the event in the public arena for debate. It seemed strange at the time that no one came out of their houses to offer sympathy but I think this had more to do with her image as a »loose« woman for living on her own in a shop. Nevertheless, through her shouting she did manage to touch her in-laws' reputation and the next day people were discussing whether they had actually eaten the chickens. How far more effective than lodging a complaint with the local police! Kulick and Stroud (1993:43) describe how similar public »proclamations of conflict« or ***kros*** regularly took place in the Papua New Guinean village where they conducted their research: »villagers — especially women — assert themselves and their autonomy by sitting in their houses and shouting through the village that they have been violated in some way«.

I have tried to describe above some events that illustrate the different kinds of oral and written forms I have come across in Nepal. I hope this has not given the impression of a single generalisable **Nepali** literacy or only one **English** literacy, since my experiences have made me realise the importance of understanding and learning both spoken and written practices specific to a certain area or group of people. This means learning not just how to write or speak in the local context, but knowing when to use certain kinds of communication. As Gumperz and Hymes point out, »the emphasis is on human groups rather than grammar per se« (1986:37). »Communication is not governed by fixed social rules; it is a two-step process in which the speaker first takes in stimuli from the outside environment... thén decides on the norms that apply to the situation at hand« (1986:15). The private associations I have around certain kinds of writing practices (e.g. personal letter writing) and oral practices (e.g. expressing grief) have been challenged by the public nature of some of the events described above. Coming from an education system where great emphasis is placed on developing specific kinds of literacy skills, I was relatively unaware of the complexity of skills that can be developed within an oral context (e.g. how to voice requests or opinions within a strongly hierarchical system). Analysing the process of the »pedagogisation of literacy«, Street and Street (1991:146) refer to this as the »privileging ways in which reading and writing are given status above oral discourse« in schools. The experience of teaching and writing reports or literacy materials in such a different situation from the U.K. has made me question and change my own teaching methods. Above all, I have become more conscious of how the meaning of my writing is never fixed, but varies according to the social and cultural context in which it is read.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Brian Street and Mahesh Pant for their comments which helped shape the final version of this paper.

Notes

1. Voluntary Service Overseas, the British Volunteer Programme, sends trained teachers, health workers, agriculturalists etc., on two year placements in the South.
2. ActionAid is a British-based NGO implementing and supporting development projects in the South.

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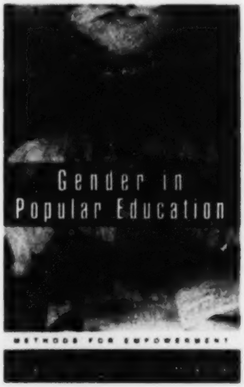

Shirley Walters / Linzi Manicom
Gender in Popular Education

Feminist popular education has developed in recent decades, as this book abundantly demonstrates. It is an important form of social activism, in dialogue with major strands of feminist practice and theory. Drawing on and critiquing the tradition of community education and political work associated with Paulo Freire, as well as the fields of adult education and feminist pedagogy, its concerns are the education methodologies and learning strategies that lead to women's empowerment.

This book is a collection of critical reflections on feminist adult education work in grassroots organisations, development projects, formal institutions and community education programmes in a wide variety of countries including South Africa, India, the United States, Canada, Malaysia, the Philippines and Australia. The contributors come from a variety of positions in the range of feminist discourses and enliven their focus on methodology with engaging shifts between personal narrative, experiential analysis, theoretical contextualization and evocative description. Their willingness to be self-critical and to experiment with new applications of concepts and practices makes this book a valuable addition to an increasingly important field.

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How socially handicapped are illiterates really? Is it right to see the acquisition of literacy skills as the panacea for all individual social problems? The case of illiterate men and women who become wealthy and influential before they begin to seek literacy generates such questions and leads one to wonder whether social mobility ought to be categorised as one of the motives for wishing to become literate. This article tells the story of thousands of Nigerian businessmen and women who are illiterate and yet successful.

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Rosemary Nwangwu

A new view of literacy: my experience in adult education practice in Nigeria

The advantages of literacy and the disadvantages of illiteracy are perhaps the only claims that raise no controversy in adult education. But even as developing nations strive to meet the 40% literacy level that will place them on the threshold of development, and even as the world vowed in the International Literacy Year to make the world literate by the year 2000, certain questions remain unanswered. For instance, who is an illiterate? Is he or she that individual who can neither read nor write? What qualifies an individual as literate? Is it an ability to read signs along the road or printed matter while still being unable to decode handwriting?. The criteria for determining who is literate and illiterate have indeed become wider than ever before[1].

For a country such as Nigeria the problem is even more complex. Who can we really say is an illiterate? Is he the trader who controls millions but uses thumb-prints or the industrialist who knows all about Form »M« for importation but can barely spell his name? Is she the market woman who owns chains of stores and several houses but cannot even recognize letters of the alphabet? Or the timber merchant who is invited to all important launching events and gets all the chieftaincy titles but can neither read nor write? Can a literate person be that person who can speak some kind of English but cannot recognize the same on paper? If the »disease« of illiteracy as it is popularly described in public rhetoric is anything to go by[2], then these men and women have certainly broken new ground in the study of illiteracy for they are now admitted to have achieved so much without literacy. Literacy is supposed to raise critical reasoning, to help an individual to achieve social mobility and to enhance economic and political equality. In fact, literacy is supposed to wipe out poverty and it has been suggested that such gains be used as a motivational slogan to attract people to literacy programmes. But can we determine along these lines who is illiterate in Nigeria? My experience in adult education practice set me thinking.

For me, and most of my classmates in our undergraduate and postgraduate years in adult education, the field opened up challenges and opportunities that seemed limitless. We had big plans as to what we would do on completion of the course as programme planners and facilitators. For me, practice was more enticing and I knew I had to become an adult educator. On graduation however, our illusions gradually gave way to reality: there were no ready adult students to teach, no job vacancies. Most of us took up teaching appointments in secondary schools. But I had to practise. I knew that out there were potential adult students. All I needed to do was to identify them. Of course the people to look for were illiterate adults.

I opened up a small adult literacy class. From a mini study I had conducted before, I knew that apart from illiterates, there were also drop-outs from the formal school system who needed to continue their education but had no intention of sitting for exams. So I wrote hand-bills advertising the two levels: literacy classes and drop-in programmes for school drop-outs.

The first three adults I enrolled were perfectly fitted for the drop-in programme. They were all married women and in business. Since they were not illiterate by my measurement, I varied the English Language texts that we used as much as possible. This was because there were not many reading materials suitable for adults for English Language lessons. I therefore had to photocopy and hand out reading materials in each lesson. I did the same for the grammar exercises. We held two hourly classes three times a week. Soon, I had two other clients — a man and a woman — in the programme. These two did not fit into my earlier programme. They were »illiterate«. But they were proficient in the use of pidgin English. The man was extremely shy but the lady was not. Our regular hours suited them but I had to create another class for them. With an addition of three more men to my programme, my problems really began.

For the three women, I discovered that the reading materials I provided were no longer challenging enough. Two of them seemed content with whatever they were given as long as grammar lessons were covered, but one was not. For the sake of the latter however, I began to write short stories developed from the day-to-day experiences of people in general, and women in particular. This had a tremendous impact and our classes began to assume a more exciting turn, even for the two who had been apparently satisfied. Soon the women began to suggest topics that I could write about for class reading exercises. Some of these topics I gave back to them to develop on their own and bring to class.

However, I soon began to feel that we had to have specific objectives for these classes. Although their general objective for enrolling in the programme was to become proficient in English, I felt we had to tie proficiency to some other more »active« behaviour. I discussed this with the women and together we come up with public speaking as our actual objective. We then began speech-making programmes and even introduced drama classes to go with them.

The two illiterate ones were more difficult for me to handle. First I decided to use the language experience approach. My aim was to provide a collaborative atmosphere for learning and to make the learning experience mutually beneficial and participatory. For the lady, this method worked perfectly, but for the man, it did not work. He simply could not generate a story. We kept using the lady's story for our exercises. After four weeks of attempting to get him to generate a story and failing, I could no longer ignore the obvious so I had to try him another way. I began to write him my own stories derived from what I assumed were his experiences. This did not work either, so we had to go back to forming words with letters and then making sentences with these words. This seemed to work, and we stuck to it. Meanwhile, by the end of six months, the lady had begun to write and read her own stories. The man made progress slowly but steadily.

The last two additions to the class were literate but barely so. They could interperse their sentences with words of English — and often sophisticated words too. The reason for this was simple: they had travelled around the world trading and had been able to pick up words that could at least enable them to communicate with their foreign business partners. Most of these words they could not read on paper, however. I had to search for a varied array of materials to suit their status as well as to deal with their basic grammatical needs. This seemed to work and we continued in that way; speech-making classes were also introduced and held jointly with the other two classes.

My learning

The conclusion that illiteracy correlates positively with poverty and lack of development has long since been established. Illiteracy is seen as a barrier to economic development and is to be wiped out at all costs[3]. The potential benefits of literacy to the development of a nation have been raised to such a high level that it has become a panacea for all developmental problems. But is that always the case in African countries?

Okraku[4], for instance, writes extensively on how perfectly the Ghanaian functions in his society even as an illiterate: never having to read house numbers since people who visit homes can identify them anyway; letters not being delivered to houses since oral communication is predominant, and transport being always available and unscheduled. Writing in the same vein, Street[5] says that the rhetoric about literacy is just that, rhetoric. Seeing illiteracy as more a symptom of poverty than the other way round, he thinks that lack of literacy may indeed be less of a handicap in daily life than is often represented. He cites Fingeret, who has shown how the illiterate communicate and develop networks of reciprocity in order to survive in the United States.

In a country such as Nigeria, for instance, lack of literacy has not prevented many businessmen and women from becoming millionaires and great industrialists. These men and women thumb-print their way to very great heights and their children help them where they get stuck. My male client in the literacy class owned a bakery which supplied bread to the immediate community and beyond, and yet he could neither read nor write. The mixed tribal nature of the country demands that people learn to communicate with their immediate neighbours, who probably do not speak the same language as they. The English language, which is the lingua franca, can therefore be said to be necessary for functionality. Yet people have succeeded without becoming literate in the language.

Trading being a major occupation for most people, they have practised and perfected the process, deriving as much help and encouragement as possible from their neighbours both literate and illiterate. Along the line, their business interests expose them to various contacts with other businessmen and women. As they try to communicate with these people, they pick up words and expressions in English that might seem sophisticated even for a university graduate. Thus, there has emerged a group of Nigerians whose standard in spoken English is very difficult to determine. Because they become rich and exposed before they begin to seek »literacy« in the sense that is popularly known, we have men and women who can produce various words of English that they certainly cannot read on paper. The fact, however, is that these people have acquired »considerable literacy skill but may be needing help in a specific area of reading, writing, spelling, etc.«[6]. Indeed as Street maintains, for these people, the stigma of illiteracy and the culturally and socially damaging effects it has on them is a greater burden than their actual literacy difficulties.

The problems I had with my adult students therefore set me thinking along those lines and I discovered that my clients needed an educational programme that would be comprehensive as well as functional for them. They needed not just an ability to communicate better orally and in writing in English but also the ability to become better managers of their workforce, better social figures, better friends to others, and generally better businessmen and women. They needed to function better in the occupations they had already succeeded at economically. Literacy education in whatever sense was not therefore of primary concern. For instance, contrary to the popular assumption that only executive graduate managers can benefit from management training courses, I discovered that skill in interacting with and managing people was of great interest to my clients, most of whom were in business and employed people too.

I decided to enrich the programme as much as possible, and introduced reading appreciation classes (which were in fact literature classes). I also included what I called functional management, which covered simple topics in personnel management. This became an instant success too because these people were already in businesses of their own. Debating classes were also introduced and so were excursions and other outings. These were all jointly held while the grammar classes remained separate. Together we attended relevant seminars and workshops for which the students paid their way. Of course, I was always with them at these events, guiding and explaining at breaks. For the courses that were specialised, I brought in »experts«, but I always told these facilitators to be as simple and practical as possible.

The class grew slowly to ten. Absenteeism was often recorded initially but became less frequent afterwards. Most had to travel for weeks sometimes but they came back ready to continue. Timing was an important consideration, and the men soon ended up using week-ends only rather than our initial three days in a week. Because I encouraged them to ask for any additional subjects they wanted in the programme, I succeeded in creating a collaborative atmosphere for learning. This was difficult at first, though, as they believed that only incompetence would make a teacher like me ask them what they would like to do. They expressed the view that I should know these things, and that was why they came to me. However, this feeling gradually gave way at my insistent but gentle prodding. Now we have settled down into a pattern of having grammar lessons, debates, outings and speech-making exercises as regular programmes. Everyone seems satisfied.

I am led to the conclusion from experience that literacies do vary after all that sometimes the people we label illiterates have committed no other crime than not having been in any formal school. The feeling of inadequacy this gives them is more social than economic. It is therefore probably safer for us in this part of the world to find ways of helping these »illiterates« live down the social stigma of their »disease«. Thus, it is probably also safer for us to talk about types of illiteracy rather than to perpetuate the great divide between the literate and the illiterate.

Notes

1. Street, B.V., International Literacy Year: Rhetoric and reality, in Adult Education and Development, No 36, Bonn 1991, pp. 161.
2. ibid.
3. Okraku, L.A., A critic on literacy in a non-literate society, in Adult Education and Development, No 36, Bonn 1991, pp. 181.
4. ibid.
5. Street, op.cit.
6. Street, op.cit.

This article also addresses the issue of how funds can be raised for existing literacy projects and monitored. The author cites numerous practical examples which have been sucdessfully applied in a number of projects in Africa.

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Tanyi Eyong Mbuagbaw

Internal funding for literacy

Over the past 20 years, there has been a substantial growth of literacy programmes throughout the African continent. Some of these programmes have been growing quite steadily, although there have been difficulties in raising funds from external donors.

How funds are raised externally, and the various problems encountered, are not the issues to be raised in this paper. The various entities do raise funds to support the qualified staff and the literature produced in the various languages, but the question that remains is how to maintain the unqualified staff in the field and how to raise funds internally to support literacy facilitators and other workers in a given project. The aim of this paper is not to provide adequate solutions for our literacy programmes, but merely to share personal experiences from a few African countries. Some of these experiences can be adapted in other language areas while some may not, due to socio-cultural differences.

For funds to be raised internally, people need to be motivated towards their literacy programme. When people are motivated, it means that certain conditions have been met. For example:

1. There must have been an awareness-building tour by the team in the language area. It is always important for teams to meet the people once in a while, explaining to them the new developments in the language and the role they play. During such tours, the villagers will certainly ask a lot of questions in order that they will not be left in doubt.

2. At least some literature needs to be produced. The local population is always interested in having at least one piece of written material in their hands. This is because seeing is believing. In most cases it is advisable to produce an alphabet chart first, before producing any other material of interest to the people.

3. The people have to be aware that the language is theirs and that the success of the language depends on their participation and contribution to the language programme.

4. A literacy awareness day should be introduced in the language programme. A literacy awareness day helps bring the villagers

and members of the village councils together. Members of the Government and the various political parties should be represented. However, the language programmes should be apolitical.

5. There should be a dynamic and widely known language committee to represent a cross-section of the community. The speakers of all the dialects are to be represented in the language committee as soon as the local population starts showing interest.

6. Circular letters should always be sent to the grassroots committees and/or village councils informing them of new developments concerning their language.

7. Policy statements for the next year should be presented and if there are any funds remaining in the coffers, a financial statement should be given to the various guests. Plans for the next one year should be presented.

How funds can be raised internally

Selling literacy materials

In most literacy programmes, the first one or two literacy materials received are usually externally sponsored. The materials are usually sold at a profit. The funds raised are used to produce other literacy materials. This has been the case in literacy programmes where there is high motivation. However, there is a problem if most of the materials are not sold or many of them are damaged during transportation or even stolen. This means a huge loss to the literacy programme. The Manyu Literacy Development Programme (MALDEP) has tried to find a way to minimise cost. Whenever its materials are sold by the supervisors, a part of the sale price belongs to them. If more copies are sold, they make more money. Any lost or damaged materials are paid for by the supervisors. This keeps the supervisors extremely careful with the materials they have.

Funding from notables and elites

In some communities, the notables and elites contribute money for the production of literacy materials or even the construction of a literacy centre. A good case in point is the Society for Kenyang Literature (SKL) and the Konkomba Literacy and Development Programme (KOLADEP). These two language programmes have been helped financially for the construction of their literacy centres and the production of literacy materials. The first 1000 alphabet charts in Kenyang were financed by the notables and elites. Many of them still contribute generously to see that the Kenyang language is taught in schools. In some cases they themselves have financed the teaching programme because they want to learn how to read and write. The Denya and Ejagham-speaking people, who are neighbours, are copying the example of the Kenyang-speaking people.

A minimum contribution from every adult

In the MALDEP programme, it was decided that every adult should contribute 100 frs each year towards the financing of the literacy programme. This amount might look quite small but when one takes into account the total population, a good amount of money can be raised. This has also been successfully done in the SKL. The money is usually collected by the village council and sent to the executive. The example has been copied by the Society for Denya Literature (SDL) and the Ejagham Language Development Association (ELDA).

Quite recently, the SKL decided that 60% of all money collected should remain within the village council, 20% with the grassroots committee and the other 20% with the executive committee of the SKL. The reason is that the executive committee is under pressure to pay the teachers since the language is now being taught in the various villages. The executive has decided that 60% of the money collected should remain within the village council to help pay the salaries of teachers.

Contribution from each chiefdom

MALDEP decided that each chiefdom had to contribute 5000 frs each year as its own contribution towards the Manyu Literacy Centre. A lot of villages have been contributing despite the difficult financial situation in the country.

Annual harvest

The annual harvest is a time to raise funds in cash or in kind within a community. This is quite common among the Konkombas in Northern Ghana. It is usually planned during the dry season when people have harvested their crops and sold them in the market in order to earn a living. This period is usually chosen because people now have money, and the crops are in. This idea was introduced among the Konkombas because most of them are farmers.

The annual harvest is organized through the district supervisors, who coordinate their activities with the zonal supervisors. Dates are chosen when each village is to be visited in each zone. Letters are sent to the village chiefs and elders announcing the visits. The various district supervisors send copies to the central office at Tamale. In some cases, officials from the central office are invited to motivate the people. The amount collected in each village is recorded and sent to the central office at Tamale.

During the annual harvest, traditional dances are organized to grace the occasion. Contributions are usually made in cash and in kind. All the contributions in kind, such as goats, yams, spices, etc., are sold either on the spot or in the market, and the money is taken to Tamale.

In certain areas, games are played in which somebody provides a chair. He pays a certain amount of money for sitting on that chair. Anybody who wishes to unseat him has to pay an amount higher than what the man paid. In some cases, the man sitting may decide to pay yet more when somebody wants to unseat him. This game is common among the Hedi in Northern Cameroon and the Konkombas in Ghana.

Group farms

In Northern Ghana, group farms are quite common among literacy programmes in the various communities. It sometimes happens that people became motivated but the means of supporting the literacy programme might be difficult. In such cases, people might decide to come together to open up group farms to support the literacy programme.

A good case in point is the Konkomba Literacy and Development Programme (KOLADEP). As the literacy programme grew among the Konkombas, certain communities and literacy classes decided to open farms in order to support KOLADEP. After harvesting the produce from these farms, one third was sold and the money donated to KOLADEP while the remainder was shared among the communities.

KOLADEP helps people by supplying them with fertilizers as loans. These are usually repaid at harvest time before a donation is made.

This has motivated certain people to open personal farms to support KOLADEP.

T-shirts

The printing of T-shirts is another source from which some literacy programmes have raised funds. This idea is usually successful among the highly motivated literacy programmes. People become proud of learning their language, and anything produced in their language is quickly bought by the people to promote their language. This is quite common among the literacy programmes in Northern Ghana where there is a high motivation to learn.

Grain project

The grain project was first launched by KOLADEP in 1989, with the help of British Christian Aid. The aim is to buy grain when the prices are low and to store it in grain warehouses. It is only sold when there is a scarcity. At that time, the grain is sold at a higher price and a lot of profit made.

Literacy awareness days

A lot of money is usually raised on such days to support literacy in the various communities. It is a day to which delegates from all the villages are invited. People should be encouraged on such days to donate generously towards the literacy programme. The most successful fund-raising event I am aware of has been for KOLADEP, when about US$ 700 was collected on a single day in support of the programme in 1991!

Soft loans

A well-organized literacy programme usually builds up confidence in whatever the people do. In Northern Ghana, where a lot of literacy is being done, there are other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that give soft loans directly to farmers and women's cooperatives to help support literacy. This has led to the growth of Women in Development in Northern Ghana. Some groups such as the Lelemi people of the Volta Region have been helped to set up a piggery through their executive. This raises pigs that are sold for profit.

Other sources

Among the Konkombas and the Bambaras in Mali, literacy at times is supported in the various communities by the opening of farms for literacy facilitators. Villages choose certain days to work in their farms and plant crops for them.

In certain areas, there are companies that opt to pay the salaries of facilitators. This has nothing to do with the various agencies involved in literacy in the country.

Control of literacy funds

Control of funds has been one of the greatest headaches in certain communities. In a few cases, people have run away with the money. Nobody accounts for the money because a proper system of accountability has not been set up.

It is important for each literacy programme to have strict control of its funds. Proper accounting should be done each time there is an executive meeting or a literacy awareness day.

The various ways in which a literacy programme can control its funds are as follows:

1. The team working in a language community could keep the money while the treasurer and the financial secretary, who are members of the executive, keep the records.
2. The money collected could be kept at the bank or the post office. In this situation, there must be three signatures to that account and one of them should be a woman.

3. In some cases, money collected from the local community is kept with the national agency that is involved in literacy. The community looks to the national agency for guidance and for all expenditures.

4. The churches could play a role also. This would usually happen in communities where there is a lot of mistrust. Important and well-respected people in the church in that community should keep the money. This is because no church will welcome any financial scandal. There might be loopholes but they are usually minimal.

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This report provides a first look at the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington. D.C. 20208-5641, and administered by Educational Testing Service, in collaboration with Westat, Inc. It provides the most detailed portrait that has ever been available on the condition of literacy in this nation — and on the unrealized potential of its citizens.

Irwin S. Kirsch / Ann Jungeblut / Lynn Jenkins / Andrew Kolstad

Executive summary from adult literacy in America

A first look at the results of the national adult literacy survey

Many past studies of adult literacy have tried to count the number of »illiterates« in this nation, thereby treating literacy as a condition that individuals either do or do not have. We believe that such efforts are inherently arbitrary and misleading. They are also damaging, in that they fail to acknowledge both the complexity of the literacy problem and the range of solutions needed to address it.

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) is based on a different definition of literacy, and therefore follows a different approach to measuring it. The aim of this survey is to profile the English literacy of adults in the United States based on their performance across a wide array of tasks that reflect the types of materials and demands they encounter in their daily lives.

To gather the information on adults' literacy skills, trained staff interviewed nearly 13,600 individuals aged 16 and older during the first eight months of 1992. These participants had been randomly selected to represent the adult population in the country as a whole. In addition, about 1,000 adults were surveyed in each of 12 states that chose to participate in a special study designed to provide state-level results that are comparable to the national data. Finally, some 1,100 inmates from 80 federal and state prisons were interviewed to gather information on the proficiencies of the prison population. In total, over 26,000 adults were surveyed.

Each survey participant was asked to spend approximately an hour responding to a series of diverse literacy tasks as well as questions about his or her demographic characteristics, educational background, reading practices, and other areas related to literacy. Based on their responses to the survey tasks, adults received proficiency scores along three scales which reflect varying degrees of skill in prose, document, and quantitative literacy. The scales are powerful tools which make it possible to explore the proportions of adults in various subpopulations of interest who demonstrated successive levels of performance.

This report describes the types and levels of literacy skills demonstrated by adults in this country and analyzes the variation in skills across major subgroups in the population. It also explores connections between literacy skills and social and economic variables such as voting, economic status, weeks worked, and earnings. Some of the major findings are highlighted here.

The literacy skills of America's adults

- Twenty-one to 23 percent — or some 40 to 44 million of the 191 million adults in this country — demonstrated skills in the lowest level of prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies (Level 1). Though all adults in this level displayed limited skills, their characteristics are diverse. Many adults in this level performed simple, routine tasks involving brief and uncomplicated texts and documents. For example, they were able to total an entry on a deposit slip, locate the time or place of a meeting on a form, and identify a piece of specific information in a brief news article. Others were unable to perform these types of tasks, and some had such limited skills that they were unable to respond to much of the survey.

- Many factors help to explain why so many adults demonstrated English literacy skills in the lowest proficiency level defined (Level 1). Twenty-five percent of the respondents who performed in this level were immigrants who may have been just learning to speak English. Nearly two-thirds of those in Level 1 (62 percent) had terminated their education before completing high school. A third were age 65 or older, and 26 percent had physical, mental, or health conditions that kept them from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities. Nineteen percent of the respondents in Level 1 reported having visual difficulties that affected their ability to read print.

- Some 25 to 28 percent of the respondents, representing about 50 million adults nationwide, demonstrated skills in the next higher level of proficiency (Level 2) on each of the literacy scales. While their skills were more varied than those of individuals performing in Level 1, their repertoire was still quite limited. They were generally able to locate information in text, to make low-level inferences using printed materials, and to integrate easily identifiable pieces of information. Further, they demonstrated the ability to perform quantitative tasks that involved a single operation where the numbers were either stated or could be easily found in text. For example, adults in this level were able to calculate the total cost of a purchase or determine the difference in price between two items. They could also locate a particular intersection on a street map and enter background information on a simple form.

- Individuals in Levels 1 and 2 were much less likely to respond correctly to the more challenging literacy tasks in the assessment — those requiring higher level reading and problem-solving skills. In particular, they were apt to experience considerable difficulty in performing tasks that required them to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy texts or to perform quantitative tasks that involved two or more sequential operations and in which the individual had to set up the problem.

- The approximately 90 million adults who performed in Levels 1 and 2 did not necessarily perceive themselves as being »at risk«. Across the literacy scales, 66 to 75 percent of the adults in the lowest level and 93 to 97 percent in the second lowest level described themselves as being able to read or write English »well« or »very well«. Moreover, only 14 to 25 percent of the adults in Level 1 and 4 to 12 percent in Level 2 said they got a lot of help from family members or friends with everyday prose, document, and quantitative literacy tasks. It is therefore possible that their skills, while limited, allowed them to meet some or most of their personal and occupational literacy needs.

- Nearly one-third of the survey participants, or about 61 million adults nationwide, demonstrated performance in Level 3 on each of the literacy scales. Respondents performing in this level on the prose and document scales were able to integrate information from relatively long or dense text or from documents. Those in the third level on the quantitative scale were able to determine the appropriate arithmetic operation based on information contained in the directive, and to identify the quantities needed to perform that operation.

- Eighteen to 21 percent of the respondents, or 34 to 40 million adults, performed in the two highest levels of prose, document, and quantitative literacy (Levels 4 and 5). These adults demonstrated proficiencies associated with the most challenging tasks in this assessment, many of which involved long and complex documents and text passages.

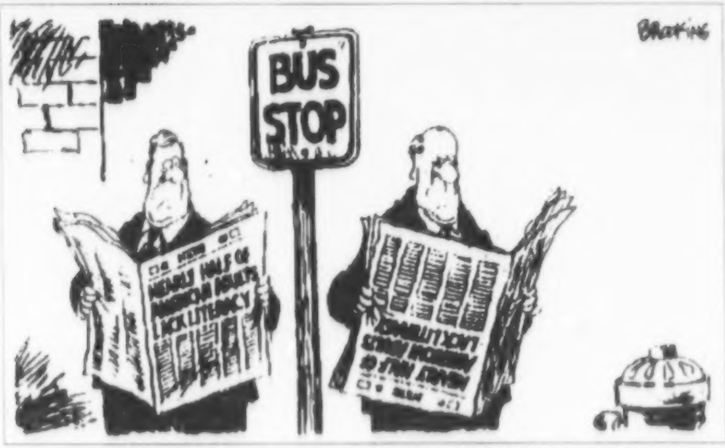
- The literacy proficiencies of young adults assessed in 1992 were somewhat lower, on average, than the proficiencies of young adults who participated in a 1985 literacy survey. NALS participants aged 21 to 25 had average prose, document, and quantitative scores that were 11 to 14 points lower than the scores of 21- to 25-year-olds assessed in 1985. Although other factors may also be involved, these performance discrepancies are probably due in large part to changes in the demographic composition of the population — in particular, the dramatic increase in the percentages of young Hispanic adults, many of whom were born in other countries and are learning English as a second language.

- Adults with relatively few years of education were more likely to perform in the lower literacy levels than those who completed high school or received some type of postsecondary education. For example, on each of the three literacy scales, some 75 to 80 percent of adults with 0 to 8 years of education were in Level 1, while fewer than 1 percent were in Levels 4 and 5. In contrast, among adults with a high school diploma, 16 to 20 percent were in the lowest level on each scale, while 10 to 13 percent were in the two highest levels. Only 4 percent of adults with four year college degrees were in Level 1; 44 to 50 percent were in the two highest levels.

- Older adults were more likely than middle-aged and younger adults to demonstrate limited literacy skills. For example, adults over the age of 65 had average literacy scores that range from 56 to 61 points (or more than one level) below those of adults 40 to 54 years of age. Adults aged 55 to 64 scored, on average, between middle-aged adults and those 65 years and older. These differences can be explained in part by the fact that older adults tend to have completed fewer years of schooling than adults in the younger age groups.

- Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander adults were more likely than White adults to perform in the lowest two literacy levels. These performance differences are affected by many factors. For example, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander adults, individuals in these groups tended to have completed fewer years of schooling in this country than had White individuals. Further, many adults of Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic origin were born in other countries and were likely to have learned English as a second language.

- Of all the racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic adults reported the fewest years of schooling in this country (just over 10 years, on average). The average years of schooling attained by Black adults and American Indian/Alaskan Native adults were similar, at 11.6 and 11.7 years, respectively. These groups had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completed more years of schooling than Hispanic adults had, on average, but more than a year less than either White adults or those of Asian/Pacific Islander origin.

- With one exception, for each racial or ethnic group, individuals born in the United States outperformed those born abroad. The exception occurs among Black adults, where there was essentially no difference (only 3 to 7 points). Among White and Asian/Pacific Islander adults, the average differences between native-born and foreign-born individuals range from 26 to 41 points across the literacy scales. Among Hispanic adults, the differences range from 40 to 94 points in favor of the native born.

- Twelve percent of the respondents reported having a physical, mental, or other health condition that kept them from participating fully in work or other activities. These individuals were far more likely than adults in the population as a whole to demonstrate performance in the range for Levels 1 and 2. Among those who said they had vision problems, 54 percent were in Level 1 on the prose scale and another 26 percent were in Level 2.

- Men demonstrated the same average prose proficiencies as women, but their document and quantitative proficiencies were somewhat higher. Adults in the Midwest and West had higher average proficiencies than those residing in either the Northeast or South.

- Adults in prison were far more likely than those in the population as a whole to perform in the lowest two literacy levels. These incarcerated adults tended to be younger, less well educated, and to be from minority backgrounds.

Literacy and social and economic characteristics

- Individuals demonstrating higher levels of literacy were more likely to be employed, work more weeks in a year, and earn higher wages than individuals demonstrating lower proficiencies. For example, while adults in Level 1 on each scale reported working an average of only 18 to 19 weeks in the year prior to the survey, those in the three highest levels reported working about twice as many weeks — between 34 and 44. Moreover, across the scales, individuals in the lowest level reported median weekly earnings of about $230 to $245, compared with about $350 for individuals performing in Level 3 and $620 to $680 for those in Level 5.

- Adults in the lowest level on each of the literacy scales (17 to 19 percent) were far more likely than those in the two highest levels (4 percent) to report receiving food stamps. In contrast, only 23 to 27 percent of the respondents who performed in

Level 1 said they received interest from a savings or bank account, compared with 70 to 85 percent in Levels 4 or 5.

- Nearly half (41 to 44 percent) of all adults in the lowest level on each literacy scale were living in poverty, compared with only 4 to 8 percent of those in the two highest proficiency levels.
- On all three literacy scales, adults in the higher levels were more likely than those in the lower levels to report voting in a recent state or national election. Slightly more than half (55 to 58 percent) of the adults in Level 1 who were eligible to vote said they voted in the past five years, compared with about 80 percent of those who performed in Level 4 and nearly 90 percent of those in Level 5.

Reflections on the results

In reflecting on the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey, many readers will undoubtedly seek an answer to a fundamental question: Are the literacy skills of America's adults adequate? That is, are the distributions of prose, document, and quantitative proficiency observed in this survey adequate to ensure individual opportunities for all adults, to increase worker productivity, or to strengthen America's competitiveness around the world?

Because it is impossible to say precisely what literacy skills are essential for individuals to succeed in this or any other society, the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey provide no firm answers to such questions. As the authors examined the survey data and deliberated on the results with members of the advisory committees, however, several observations and concerns emerged.

Perhaps the most salient finding of this survey is that such large percentages of adults performed in the lowest levels (Levels 1 and

2) of prose, document, and quantitative literacy. In and of itself, this may not indicate a serious problem. After all, the majority of adults who demonstrated limited skills described themselves as reading or writing English well, and relatively few said they got a lot of assistance from others in performing everyday literacy tasks. Perhaps these individuals are able to meet most of the literacy demands they encounter currently at work, at home, and in their communities.

Yet, some argue that lower literacy skills mean a lower quality of life and more limited employment opportunities. As noted in a recent report from the American Society for Training and Development, »The association between skills and opportunity for individual Americans is powerful and growing.... Individuals with poor skills do not have much to bargain with; they are condemned to low earnings and limited choices.«[1]

The data from this survey appear to support such views. On each of the literacy scales, adults whose proficiencies were within the two lowest levels were far less likely than their more literate peers to be employed full-time, to earn high wages, and to vote. Moreover, they were far more likely to receive food stamps, to be in poverty, and to rely on nonprint sources (such as radio and television) for information about current events, public affairs, and government.

Literacy is not the only factor that contributes to how we live our lives, however. Some adults who displayed limited skills reported working in professional or managerial jobs, earning high wages, and participating in various aspects of our society, for example, while others who demonstrated high levels of proficiency reported being unemployed or out of the labor force. Thus, having advanced literacy skills does not necessarily guarantee individual opportunities.

Still, literacy can be thought of as a currency in this society. Just as adults with little money have difficulty meeting their basic needs, those with limited literacy skills are likely to find it more challenging to pursue their goals — whether these involve job advancement, consumer decision-making, citizenship, or other aspects of their lives. Even if adults who performed in the lowest literacy levels are not experiencing difficulties at present, they may be at risk as the nation's economy and social fabric continue to change.

Beyond these personal consequences, what implications are there for society when so many individuals display limited skills? The answer to this question is elusive. Still, it seems apparent that a nation in which large numbers of citizens display limited literacy skills has fewer resources with which to meet its goals and objectives, whether these are social, political, civic, or economic.

If large percentages of adults had to do little more than be able to sign their name on a form or locate a single fact in a newspaper or table, then the levels of literacy seen in this survey might not warrant concern. We live in a nation, however, where both the volume and variety of written information are growing and where increasing numbers of citizens are expected to be able to read, understand, and use these materials.

Historians remind us that during the last 200 hundred years, our nation's literacy skills have increased dramatically in response to new requirements and expanded opportunities for social and economic growth. Today we are a better educated and more literate society than at any time in our history.[2] Yet, there have also been periods of imbalance — times when demands seemed to surpass levels of attainment.

In recent years, our society has grown more technologically advanced and the roles of formal institutions have expanded. As this has occurred, many have argued that there is a greater need for all individuals to become more literate and for a larger proportion to develop advanced skills.[3] Growing numbers of individuals are expected to be able to attend to multiple features of information in lengthy and sometimes complex displays, to compare and contrast information, to integrate information from various parts of a text or document, to generate ideas and information based on what they read, and to apply arithmetic operations sequentially to solve a problem.

The results from this and other surveys, however, indicate that many adults do not demonstrate these levels of proficiency. Further, the continuing process of demographic, social, and economic change within this country could lead to a more divided society along both racial and socioeconomic lines.

Already there is evidence of a widening division. According to the report »America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!«, over the past 15 years the gap in earnings between professionals and clerical workers has grown from 47 to 86 percent while the gap between white collar workers and skilled tradespeople has risen from 2 to 37 percent. At the same time, earnings for college educated males 24 to 34 years of age have increased by 10 percent while earnings for those with high school diplomas have declined by 9 percent. Moreover, the poverty rate for Black families is nearly three times that for White families.[4] One child in five is born into poverty, and for minority populations, this rate approaches one in two.

In 1990, then-President Bush and the nation's governors, including then-Governor Clinton, adopted the goal that all of America's adults be literate by the year 2000. The responsibility for meeting this objective must, in the end, be shared among individuals, groups, and organizations throughout our society. Programmes that serve adult learners cannot be expected to solve the literacy problem alone, and neither can the schools. Other institutions — ranging from the largest and most complex government agency, to large and small businesses, to the family — all have a role to play in ensuring that adults who need or wish to improve their literacy skills have the opportunity to do so. It is also important that individuals themselves come to realize the value of literacy in their lives and to recognize the benefits associated with having better skills. Only then will more adults in this nation develop the literacy resources they need to function in society, to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential.

Notes

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2. L.C. Stedman and C.F. Kaestle, Literacy and Reading Performance in the United States from 1880 to the Present, en: C.F. Kaestle et al., Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1991. T. Snyder (ed.), 120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait, Washington, DC, National Center for Education Statistics, 1993.
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4. National Center on Education and the Economy, America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages/The Report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990, June, p. 20.

The World Bank has published some new Papers which might be of interest to our readers.

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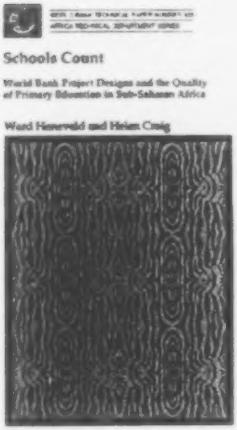
Education and Training of Accountants
in Sub-Saharan Anglophone Africa

Sonia R. Johnson



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AFRICA TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT SERIES

Schools Count

World Bank Project Designs and the Quality
of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa

Ward Heneveld and Helen Craig

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Akihiro Chiba examines the outcomes of the »World Declaration on Education for All«, which was adopted at the 1990 Jomtien Conference. What has changed since, has the illiteracy rate in fact been reduced, and how can progress be made? This paper was presented at the International Literacy Conference in Pennsylvania in March 1996. Akihiro Chiba is Professor of Education at the International Christian University, Tokyo (10-2 Osawa, 3-chome Mitaka-shi 181, Tokyo, Japan) and Director of the Institute for Educational Research and Services, ICU.

Akihiro Chiba

International literacy watch: warning against lip-service

I. Jomtien and lip-service to literacy

UNESCO advocated »education for all« already in its 2nd Medium Term Plan 1984-1989. It was an epoch-making decision to conceptually integrate literacy, primary education, continuing education, and adult education, and it helped its Member States and also the Secretariat to ensure a more integrated approach in basic education. While UNESCO was so hysterically opposed to the use of the term »basic education« in the 1980s for reasons which were totally academic and anachronistic, it had to adopt »basic education for all« in its third Medium Term Plan 1990-1995. Despite UNESCO's advocacy, education for all was only known among so-called educationists in UNESCO's circle, and it was not much on the world's agenda.

It was the late Jim Grant (UNICEF) who broke this stalemate, although he had to wait patiently until Mayor surfaced as the new Director General of UNESCO. He desperately wanted UNICEF to come back to the field of education from where he had withdrawn UNICEF's assistance several years earlier over the feud with the former regime of UNESCO. UNICEF was never satisfied with the one-sided approach of supporting only the health and physical aspects of child development and wanted to incorporate education in its so-called integrated service to children. In order to justify UNICEF's return to educational assistance before its Executive Board, he needed a big international event. The Grant-Mayor alliance was immediately formed, and they invited the World Bank to join in this international event. The World Bank's partnership was considered extremely important because of its prestige in the development assistance field and its major share in educational aid. The World Bank initially was not totally convinced and adamantly opposed the inclusion of literacy because of its lending policy in those days. It took a political decision, however, to join the group.

UNDP panicked. It felt that it was left out of some sort of an international conspiracy, and that it was totally unacceptable to accept such a fate because of its claim to be the World's central development agency. A frantic call was made to Paris, and finally its face was saved. Thus the alliance of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the

World Bank was formed to organize a major world conference on education. A praise-worthy effort was made by the joint secretariat to prepare the Conference.

The Jomtien Conference was not intended to be a technical conference, nor one of Ministers of Education. It was directly addressed to Heads of State and major policy-makers, and was essentially intended to secure the political commitment of States to education for all. All development agencies had learned a bitter lesson that their development efforts were neutralized without a sufficient level of literacy and basic education among the target population. Basic education and literacy are critically important to achieve development goals — whether in agriculture, industry, rural development, health, or any other field.

The co-hosting of the Conference by the World Bank and UNDP was more effective in convincing government authorities of the importance of basic education, which UNESCO alone could not have achieved. Although the Jomtien conference's World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs were spelled out in technocratic terms, the real intention was to pin down government authorities in committing themselves to basic education. While NGOs did not play as prominent a part as they do today in the development of basic education, they were given a major role in the Jomtien Conference, and responded actively to the call.

All the representatives of the governments present at Jomtien enthusiastically supported the Declaration and agreed without reservation on the absolute priority to be placed on basic education.

The Jomtien Conference was a big success, and everyone was pleased with the results. All the delegates returned home with a pledge to give priority to basic education. The funding agencies such as the World Bank and UNICEF announced their intention of increasing lending and grant aid to basic education. UNDP's support for basic education was related to the degree of priority placed by the respective governments on basic education because of its rules of country programming, but it also expected that such a development would follow. Despite the obvious hostility and reluctance of the US Delegation, UNESCO was given the central role of coordination as a clearing house for follow-up actions by all partners.

During the Jomtien Conference, there was some tacit agreement not to argue about the difference of opinion over the concept of education for all, but for the World Bank and UNDP, and in fact for most government representatives, it meant »universal primary education«. Literacy was casually mentioned, in fact, in view of the »1990 International Literacy Year.«

While UNESCO was trying to integrate literacy, formal and non-formal basic education, and continuing education at least conceptually in EFA, the operational definition of EFA for most governments and the funding agencies was just universalization of formal primary education with some directly linked non-formal education elements. There was considerable lip-service and hypocrisy over literacy in the international community of development and funding agencies and in national official circles.

II. Statistical illiteracy trends 1990-1995

Five years have passed since the Jomtien Conference, and it is important to evaluate its impact on the reduction of illiteracy. In this connection the analysis of statistical illiteracy trends between 1990 and 1995 needs to be undertaken first.

If the new revised 1994 projections are used, there was no quantitative decline in the absolute number of the world's adult illiterates between 1990 and 1995. It is only true to say that the increase in the absolute number of the world's adult illiterates in the past has now been halted around the year 1990-1995. However, the global figure is totally misleading because the adult illiterates in developing countries have kept increasing from 868 million (1990) to 872 million (1995). It is only beyond 1995 that a minor decrease is foreseen: 872 million (1995) to 870 million (2000). However, this trend is not visible as far as Africa and South Asia are concerned. The figures for both regions show no sign of decrease in the absolute number of adult illiterates even after 2010.

One has to ask oneself seriously what the real impact of the Jomtien Conference has been. At least statistically, there is no visible impact on the world illiteracy situation.

Table 1

Number of developing countries which showed decreases in illiterates between 1990 and 1995

	Total developing countries listed	*Number of countries which showed decrease in illiterates between 1990 and 1995*	*Total decrease in illiterates between 1990 and 1995*
Africa	40	14	-1,334,000
Asia & Oceania	25	15	-17,663,000
Latin America & Caribean	26	17	-745,000
Arab States	15	6	-261,000
Total	106	54	-20,003,000

Note: For the purpose of this table, the following countries constitute Arab States: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Rep, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates. Note: Calculated on the basis of statistical figures given in UNESCO, statistical issues, (Paris, 1994), STE-16: 14-17.

If one takes a closer look at the statistics, one comes to understand yet another alarming fact. Out of 106 developing countries listed in UNESCO's latest statistical issue, a little over 50% of the countries registered varying degrees of achievements in decreasing adult illiterates.

Out of the total decrease of 20,003,000, the People's Republic of China alone accounts for 15,436,000. If China is not counted, the developing countries all together recorded a reduction of only 4,567,000. It was only through the draconian measures of the People's Republic of China that the world could register the halt in the increase in the absolute number of adult illiterates. Is it too provocative to say that the impact of the Jomtien Conference is not visible in a major way except in China?

Table 2

Literacy trends (1990-1995) in those countries with over 1 million illiterates

		Illiterates increased		*Illiterates decreased*	
	Countries (1990)	*Countries*	*Figure (thousands) 1990 - 1995*	*Countries*	*Figure (thousands) 1990 - 1995*
Africa	24	17	4,080	7	1,129
Asia & Oceania	15	9	22,120	6	1,868
China	1	—	—	1	15,436
Latin America & Caribbean	7	4	549	3	412
Arab States	8	7	2,327	1	25

Note: Calculated on the basis of statistical figures given in UNESCO, statistical issues, (Paris, 1994), STE-16: 14-17.

The problem of illiteracy is closely related to rapid population growth. Many actions to combat illiteracy could not keep pace with the increasing number of people who grow up as adult illiterates.

Over 50 countries in the world had over 1 million adult illiterates in 1990. What has been their performance between 1990 and 1995?

The above statistics show that only 18 countries or one third of the countries with over 1 million adult illiterates in 1990 managed to decrease their numbers between 1990 and 1995 while 37 countries on the contrary registered an increase. Here again, the increase in adult illiterates is far greater than the decrease, i.e. an increase of 29,076,000 against a decrease of 18,920,000. These statistics make us wonder what the real impact of the Jomtien Conference is!

III. Literacy: abandoned child of EFA?

It obviously makes sense for UNESCO to raise concerns over the high population countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan. An illiteracy map of the world would shift to a literacy map if all of these nine countries massively reduced the numbers of illiterates. The situation is, however, the reverse.

Out of the nine countries, China, Brazil, and Nigeria reduced the absolute number of the illiterate population by 16.1 million between 1990 and 1995 while the other countries, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Pakistan produced an additional 21.2 million illiterates in the same period. It looks as if it is an endless losing battle. The EFA Summit of these nine countries met in New Delhi in December 1993, but while they prominently announced their intention to achieve education for all, the proceedings were not so productive in launching a new literacy drive (UNESCO 1993a). They give the impression that the government authorities believe that EFA can only be built on universal primary education (UPE) because illiterate adults are going to vanish sooner or later. While many countries record over 90% primary enrollment, their survival rates are disquieting (UNESCO 1993b, 1991). Many of the dropouts will turn illiterate sooner or later. This one-sided approach of UPE without literacy action under EFA will be ineffective. Furthermore, the young illiterates are soon to become illiterate parents, and they will be less interested in sending their children to school. Thus, lack of literacy among parents will jeopardize the chances of UPE as well. Bangladesh did switch to such a one-sided policy in the 80s by suspending the literacy campaign and by even abolishing the Directorate of Mass Education, leaving literacy action entirely in the hands of NGOs, but it had to finally recognize the importance of the dual policy of literacy education and UPE in recent years.

Pakistan concentrates on development in the formal sector, and practically all bilateral and multilateral assistance is being poured into the universalization of primary education. However, with the backlog of illiterate adults, such investment is not yielding the expected results. Illiterate parents do not understand the value of schooling at all, and dropout and non-school attendance are openly accepted in villages where an illiterate sub-culture persists. Unfortunately, the development of the NGO sector lags far behind, which leaves the entire field of »literacization« untouched.

UNESCO rightly points to the importance of political will, for EFA, but in many of the developing countries such political will is only manifested toward UPE and not toward literacy. The same allegation can be made against bilateral and multilateral donor agencies as well. Such agencies are normally operating within the framework of national priorities, and if such a national priority is missing, they are constrained from according the support to literacy. This is particularly true of UNDP although it did commit to support literacy action at Jomtien. The World Bank is the agency which could twist the arms of governments to overturn official priorities, but it has no »will« whatsoever to insist on placing literacy on the priority list and provide lending support. UNICEF was the strong supporter of activities in the field of non-formal education, including literacy for women and girls, at the time of the Jomtien Conference and even advocated the importance of education through a non-formal »third channel« after the Jomtien Conference. However, there was a major policy shift in education in 1995 whereby UNICEF has become prominently a UPE-oriented donor agency although its decentralized structures leave hopefully some room for literacy support in the field.

IV. National will for literacy

Success of literacy action has been attributed to the »political will« of governments. UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy for 1996-2001 also refers to the importance of »renewed political commitment« on the part of Member States to meet the goal of EFA. What is »political will«, and is it enough to achieve EFA? In many countries, »political will« is often reduced to the campaign speeches of the presidents or ministers, which tend to be ad hoc and sporadic. Such precarious political will is not conducive to any sustained action for literacy. Furthermore, literacy has suffered more from the discontinuity of »political will« rather than the lack of it. Frequent changes in government have even ruined the infrastructure for literacy where literacy was implicated in political clashes.

Earlier success stories of literacy were often related to those literacy campaigns carried out under socialist ideology — either by the government or the party: Ethiopia and Tanzania in Africa, Cuba and Nicaragua in Latin America and the Caribbean, China, Myanmar, and Vietnam in Asia to quote a few. However, the majority of them invariably failed or lagged in their economic development in the past. Education was beginning to be considered as a factor in national development in the 60s, and those directly concerned with literacy were keen to advocate the direct causality of literacy and economic development. The poor economic performance of these socialist countries has shattered the hope of such advocacy. UNESCO's performance in the Experimental World Literacy Programme was not sufficiently brilliant either to claim the causality of literacy and economic development. However, the more recent economic recovery of China and Vietnam revived some hope of claiming literacy-economic progress causality. Literacy has since shifted toward more human, value-oriented approaches, especially since the International Symposium in Persepolis in 1975. If political will is narrowly confined to partisan politics or particular political personalities, it will not lead to satisfactory literacy development. In more recent years, success stories come from technocratic or government initiatives and a pragmatic approach for literacy. Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia etc. belong to this group. They have carefully worked out national plans, well institutionalized national, regional, and local infrastructures, technically sound instructional materials, primers, teachers' guides, and training programmes etc., and fairly stable financial expenditure on literacy. It may still be considered political will, but it is more the will of the government administration.

In the early literacy campaign of Indonesia in the 50s and early 60s, villages after villages were declared to be literacy villages in the wave of politically promoted literacy campaigns, but these could not be sustained due to the paucity of administration-backed follow-up action. Indonesia's genuinely successful literacy action came when its Ministry of Education launched the nation-wide literacy programme in the mid-70s with the development of the famous »Paket A« instructional materials. Another success is evident in Thailand where the highly educated competent technocrats in the Department of Nonformal Education experimented with many innovative ideas and designs unleashed from the conventional approach and successfully developed a national programme of non-formal education with unique equivalency with formal education. A similar programme is being developed in the Philippines. Here political will certainly means »the will of the government administration.«

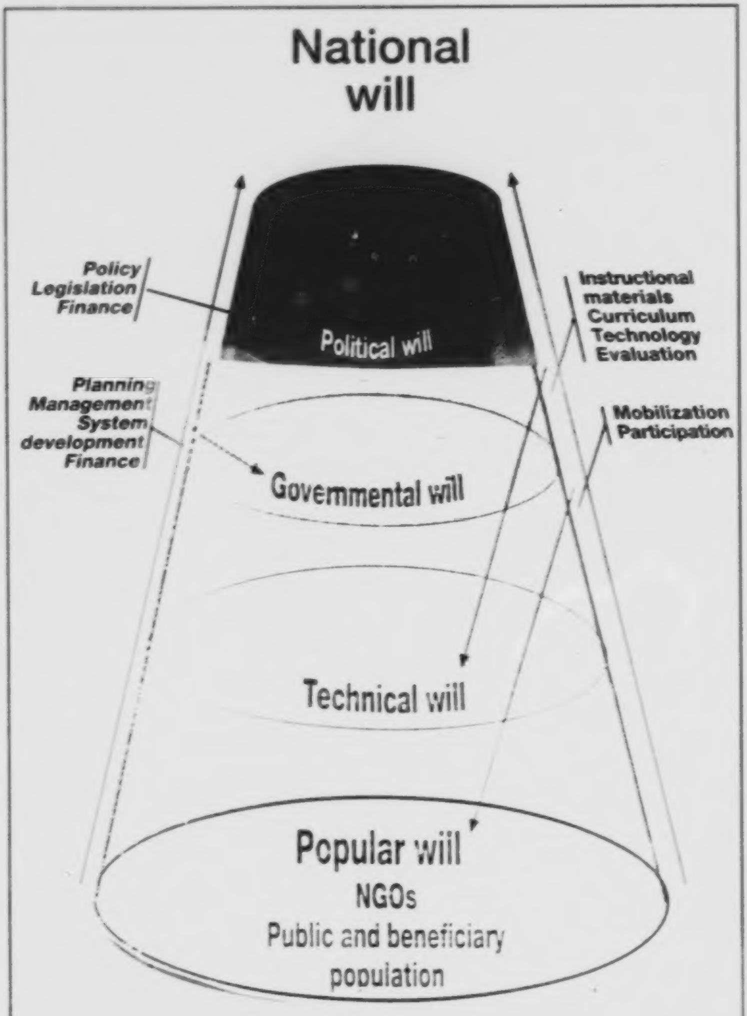
Apart from political will, there must exist »technical will« as well. So many technical dimensions are required to support sustained literacy action, such as personnel training, curriculum development, primers or instructional material development, illustrations, planning and management, monitoring and evaluation, etc.. However, compared to the formal education sector, the non-formal education sector has a serious dearth of professionals to support literacy development. Professional expertise in formal education is often not transferable to literacy action because of different systems, different target groups, especially adults with different motivations, more complicated language issues, etc. Compared to formal education, academic or practical research is much less developed in non-formal education. Professional expertise in literacy and non-formal education is scarce and often scattered, and needs to be more effectively pooled. Promotion, mobilization, and development of technical will are as important as political will to render literacy action a success.

Political will has to be enlarged to »National Will« if literacy action is to be sustained and successful. »National Will« also includes those wills at grassroots level which may be termed »popular will« Unless the genuine motivation of the target population is raised, no significant breakthrough will be possible. Literacy action will end up in a top-down approach if political will is not supported by popular will. Such popular will may best be developed by grassroots NGOs. Unilateral decision by the government, for example, on the choice of languages of literacy instruction will affect seriously the fate of particular population groups. Here consultation and agreement between the government and the population concerned is important before launching literacy programmes. However, without the enhancement of popular will on the part of the population, such consultation may not be feasible. Political will in its genuine sense must thus be enlarged to a national will covering political, governmental, technical, and popular will.

While literacy is first and foremost the responsibility of governments, there are so many governments which are neither convinced nor serious about undertaking their literacy missions. Here popular literacy movements from the bottom are essential to remind the political and government leaders of their responsibility. Here is a greater role which NGOs or local organisations can play to fill in the gaps left by the incapacity of some governments, often caused by resource constraints. Strong »popular will« motivated by NGOs and local organizations will, it is hoped, produce some positive catalytic effect in nurturing the »national will« for literacy.

V. The World *Terakoya* Movement

The World *Terakoya* Movement is one such example of trying to create a favorable climate for developing »popular will« at the grassroots developing countries by providing support from the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan (NFUAJ) directly to indigenous NGOs engaged in literacy action. It is the movement inspired by UNESCO's mission in literacy and started during the preparatory period for the 1990 International Literacy Year. *Terakoya* consists of three Japanese characters: *tera* (temple), *ko* (child), and *ya* (house), but *tera* and *ko* combined mean »learning child.« *Terakoya* is, therefore, equivalent to learning center or place. *Terakoyas* mushroomed spontaneously throughout Japan during the 14th through 18th centuries, as the place for learning of the common people. Any learned persons, *samurai* or priests, could open such places and provided self-sustained basic education and literacy, moral education etc.. *Terakoyas* were instrumental to the very rapid universalization of primary education under the modern national system of education since 1872. It is, therefore, the message from Japan to the developing world that the rapid development of Japan was mainly due to the existence of such popular will for learning among ordinary people and that any countries without the spread of basic education and literacy can


National will
Policy
Legislation
Finance
Political will
Instructional materials
Curriculum
Technology
Evaluation
Planning
Management
System development
Finance
Mobilization
Participation
Governmental will
Technical will
Popular will
NGOs
Public and beneficiary population

National will for literacy

not expect to make a significant breakthrough in national socio-economic development.

The volume of cooperation under the World Terakoya Movement has steadily increased since 1993 to cover some 40 projects amounting to approximately one million dollars annually. Between 1989 and the present, the movement has directly reached some 300,000 illiterate adult learners.

Although this figure is insignificant compared to the world's 885 million illiterates, it is significant evidence of a popular will in an industrially advanced country. Such popular will is manifested in its unique method of fund raising: *Kakisonjihagaki* Campaign. In the Japanese postal system, one buys postcards (*hagaki*) which have stamps already printed on them. If one misspells the name or address, or makes mistakes in the text, one can not send them because it would be impolite and would consequently result in loss of face on the part of the sender. Thus, so many thousands of such misspelled (*kakisonji*) cards are accumulated in households. As long as they are not posted, the stamps are valid, and they could be exchanged for new ones at post offices. However, most people had not taken such trouble before. So local UNESCO associations or local terakoya committees in Japan collected them and exchanged them for new cards or new stamps which they sell to large firms and corporations. The funds thus generated will be contributed to grassroots literacy projects under the World Terakoya Movement. The whole process involves many volunteers, who at the same time learn more about literacy problems in developing countries through the World Terakoya Movement.

Literacy support under the World Terakoya Movement is intended to empower the already existing grassroots literacy NGOs in the developing countries and to achieve their self-reliance. Support to one NGO is, therefore, on a very small scale ranging from $10,000 to $15,000 annually and limited to five years to avoid over-dependence and perpetuation of external support. NFUAJ selects some forty projects annually on the basis of the requests received from NGOs in developing countries and issues the project information brochure for the benefit of its possible supporters, especially local UNESCO associations, clubs, and terakoya committees in Japan. They will choose the projects they want to support and provide the funding collected from their *kakisonjihagaki* campaign through NFUAJ. Thus, supporters know exactly where and to whom their funds will go, and they often exchange letters and photos. Many of them now undertake study visits to those project sites which they support. This mutually visible cooperation is extremely important to generate mutual understanding, trust, and friendship. Materials such as photos, videotapes, colourful instructional materials or products for income generation developed out of the literacy projects are extensively used as live materials for education for international understanding in Japanese schools.

The World Terakoya Movement is not intended to develop a usual »donor-recipient« relationship, but it is operated on the basis of equal partnership of mutual learning and sharing the joy and significance of living together in this world. The concept of *Kyosei* is the philosophical foundation of this equal partnership and mutual learning. It is the new form of cooperation with philosophy. In several countries, such as Bangladesh and Nepal, national terakoya committees have been set up to develop networks of those NGOs receiving cooperation from the World Terakoya Movement within a country, for mutual exchange of experiences and information, cooperation and joint action to work with the governments and funding agencies.

NFUAJ through the World Terakoya Movement has established a certain level of international credibility as an NGO partner in the Jomtien follow up, and it organized, in cooperation with UNESCO and the World Federation of UNESCO Associations, a World Conference of NGOs — Midterm Review of the International literacy

Decade in Tokyo, September 5 — 8, 1995. It was uniquely an NGO initiative and impressed upon the world community the importance of non-governmental sector cooperation in literacy development. The Conference was seriously concerned about the lack of political will for literacy on the part of many governments and strongly recommended that the international literacy watch be set up to promote »literacy awareness« among government leaders of the world. The preceding statistical analysis clearly endorses such dismal pictures of literacy development and disappointing performance by many governments and some funding agencies.

VI. International literacy watch

Occasional lip-service to literacy and the lack of the sustained political will on the part of many governments are unfortunately the sad state of affairs at present. Under such circumstances, 855 million illiterate people, of whom 565 million are women, will continue to live under the present situation of deprivation for the rest of their lives and may pass away without even knowing and enjoying what literacy might bring to their lives. Furthermore, unless the present internal efficiency in the formal school system is drastically improved, the school system will continue to reject or to push out millions of children who will grow up as illiterate adults. While governments will have to maintain their priority of achieving high quality education for all through the universalization of primary education, the present lack of political will or simple lip-service to literacy is a matter of serious concern. UNESCO, being the sole international organization in education operating on a global level, should normally assume responsibility as the guardian of literacy, but it has certain limitations because of its intergovernmental structure and international protocol in making very candid observations or criticisms directly to those »delinquent« governments neglecting literacy.

UNESCO has tried its best through international and regional conferences and seminars, publication of articles and use of mass media to impress upon the governments the importance of literacy. In fact, no government has ever said »no« to UNESCO on the importance of literacy. However, they have not done much either to intensity their literacy action. Under such circumstances, UNESCO could not go any further. We have lived in such a state of stalemate far too long and many of us believed that the Jomtien Conference would do the magic. Unfortunately, however, we are back to square one five years after the Jomtien Conference.

The formation of an international literacy watch was recommended strongly by the World NGOs Conference on literacy in 1995 in order to break through this state of affairs. It is considered important to appeal to the world community to keep »literacy« always on the agenda in the world so as to raise international consciousness. It is felt that the time has come when some »neglectfull« governments will have to be advised directly to revise their policies and priorities, even by indicating certain worst scenarios such countries may have to face in ten, twenty, and fifty years. This is an equivalent in literacy of the Club of Rome or the International Human Rights Watch.

The first step in the follow-up of the 1995 World NGOs Conference on Literacy is to set up a national literacy watch in those countries where the germination of national will for literacy is desperately needed. The first of such initiatives has come from Nepal. The National Committee for the Terakoya Movement was formed in December, 1995 and a national resource center for nonformal education was also set up on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee year of the Tulasi Meher UNESCO Club. Before its democratization, Nepal used to be shrouded in a climate of hypocrisy over literacy despite its appalling illiteracy rates. The country is now extremely active, almost like a beehive, with non-governmental initiatives in literacy. The Terakoya National Committee serves as the national literacy watch to keep a close and constant watch over the performance of the government and to maintain its priority on basic education and especially literacy.

A similar Terakoya National Committee in Bangladesh or other appropriate additional committees soon to be formed in other countries should be invited to serve as the respective national literacy watch. A national literacy watch can be formed by a prominent personality respected by all concerned in the country, to whom the government would naturally be inclined to listen with respect. Such an initiative may trigger the formation of a popular will for literacy and eventually influence governments to honor their duties. The international literacy watch is to promote the formation of such a national literacy watch where one does not exist and once it is set up, it is essentially to support the initiative and work of the national literacy watch, to help disseminate information on its activities, to form the network of national literacy watches, and to appeal to the international and national community, the mass media, and policy makers by sending straight messages about what is right or wrong without the usual diplomatic protocol, nuances, or constraints. Especially this last function has been neglected for a long time, and someone has to break the ice.

The International Literacy Watch is at the initial exploratory stage, and it is yet to be seen what direction and form it will take: a more academic orientation and/or a critical stance that will annoy negligent governments. It is hoped that UNESCO's collective consultation of EFA and library NGOs will come up with the concrete scope and terms of reference of the international literacy watch.

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IDEAS
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In Latin America, perhaps more than anywhere else, community radio stations are an important instrument in the promotion of popular communication and, as such, a powerful tool in the creation of opportunities for participatory adult education. Investment costs can be kept relatively low if the organizers of such stations do not succumb to the urge of copying the style of large professional broadcasting networks. Since local coverage is the aim, it suffices to use low-power transmitters that operate on an FM band, and the sound equipment does not have to have hi-fi standards. In optimal situations, the people themselves can take charge of the community radio station after an initial period of basic training, and the entire neighbourhood can become involved in the transmission of programmes.

Guillermo Gutiérrez, Director of ICEPH (Instituto Cordillerano de Estudios y Promoción Humana), an Andean non-government institute located in El Bolsón, Río Negro, Argentina, and dedicated to social research and the promotion of people, tells about his institute's experiences in setting up such stations. In the following contribution, he relates his experiences, draws conclusions, and lets the people speak for themselves as one such Argentine station in the community of El Bolsón, La Señal, celebrates its first birthday.

Guillermo Gutiérrez

Training of communication workers in the area of popular radio broadcasting.

An enthusiastic sector of popular education

In the vast field of popular education there is an area of activity where a great deal of enthusiasm can be found: the training of popular communication workers in the operation of popular radio broadcasting. When we speak of popular communication workers, we do not mean professional radio people who use a special language or produce contributions specially prepared for the pleasure of the working public or peasants, but communication workers from the following social classes in particular: popular communities and villages, union activists, members of grassroots organizations, women involved in the common struggle, or peasant farmers. Training for communication workers such as these has various objectives: to restore a say to the oppressed and forgotten sectors, to restore the value of local ambits and the language and music of the people, to spread local news and promote communication among people who live in the same community.

Parallel to these objectives are the conditions for putting them into practice, and the basis for this is organization of the sectors that desire to make themselves heard. To restore a say to the popular sectors, it takes more than just training them in the art of communication: at the same time they must be mobilized and organized to create self-directed communication space.

The ICEPH experience

ICEPH was launched in 1986. The team set up its headquarters in the Patagonian Andes, a region where thousands of workers and people live on the fringe of society alongside those who make their living from tourism and related sectors. Most of them are rural immigrants who came to eke out a poor existence in the impoverished districts and poor communities of the region's towns and cities, and criollo and indigenous peasants from the plateau and cordillera region of southern Chile make up the greater part. They are the heirs of rich native cultures, of which only vestiges remain today, and that means that any struggle to restore social and political justice must take up the struggle to restore cultural identity. During the first phase of their work, the ICEPH team concentrated on producing and transmitting radio forums and programmes on workers' rights. In 1987 they initiated a training programme for popular communication workers with the support of ICCO, a non-government cooperation agency from the Netherlands.

The first activity of consequence was a training programme for a group of active members of the popular community of *Virgen Misionera de San Carlos de Bariloche* who were interested in setting up a small community radio station. The population of the community in question is very poor and faced with a continuous struggle for the land on which they live. Over the course of years, with the motivation and support of the parish priest and his team, the people have been working to improve their living conditions. It was during this time that numerous low power FM radio stations began springing up in Argentina. The trend was encouraged by the absence of any legal regulations in the area. The gap was filled under the military dictatorship with the creation of a law that remains in force although its legitimacy has been disputed.

Photo: G. Gutiérrez

The group that initiated the project included several grassroots activists and a number of men and women from the community. In all, twelve persons received training on three weekends, at the end of which time the rudimentary station went on the air. From that day on, the station, which conducted its broadcasting mainly on weekends, became a dynamic force in the community, linking neighbours, disseminating local news, and providing a forum for the people to discuss their common problems.

In the course of time, with some turnover in the original founding team, the group came to be formed almost exclusively of community members, young people in particular, who had discovered for themselves an area of creativity and struggle.

A second important project was also initiated in Bariloche — in the neighbourhood of El Frutillar, which is located in a higher part of the city, and does not enjoy any access to the benefits, pleasures and comforts of this centre of international tourism. At an altitude of some 900 metres, the district is continually battered by the cold winds of the cordillera, and in 1990 (when the project was launched), its residents had neither telephone service nor any other means of fast communication to connect them with the centre of the city. Upon learning of the community radio project in the neighbourhood of Virgen Misionera, a group of citizens living in El Frutillar petitioned ICEPH for assistance in setting up a community radio station of their own. After a few initial evaluation meetings, a training programme was initiated for a group of fifteen persons. In a way, the project was larger in scope than the one in *Virgen Misionera*. ICEPH decided to conduct an integrated initiative, and, rather than restricting activities to training, proceeded to promote and assist the project holistically and on a long-term basis.

Activities were initiated in April 1990, and in October of that year the radio station was inaugurated. It soon became a social establishment for all the neighbourhoods in the higher part of the city, not only as a means of communication, but also as a motivating factor for numerous social activities encouraging solidarity as well as participation in sports and celebrations. The team was wholly comprised of members from the community, and because of the large turnover, training had to be repeated at various intervals (another cycle is currently in progress). The high turnover rate was due to the voluntary nature of the tasks and the fact that all the workers belonged to the low-income bracket, which made it difficult for them to participate on a regular basis.

URRACA — A project in El Salvador

An integral approach to training communication workers implies that from the start, instead of limiting training to a number of seminars or workshops, the trainers must become personally in-

Photo: G. Gutiérrez

volved in all the activities and experiences of the group being trained. One particular experience of such involvement for the ICEPH team was the development of the URRACA project in the Central American country of El Salvador.

Our team established contact with the initiators of this project during the 1992 meeting of the World Association of Community Radio Stations in Mexico. At the time, with the country still in the ravages of a bloody war, the idea of realizing such a project was still only a dream. But the aim was clear: to involve groups of rural peasants in the reconstruction of civilian life. We visited El Salvador to conduct a preliminary evaluation, and found opportunities as well as people. Our first measure was to help formulate a project plan in order to apply for funding. A proposal was submitted to the World Association for Christian Communication WACC, and the project was approved at the beginning of 1993. The first phase (December through March 1992) was financed by the communities themselves, during which time a study was conducted in five rural areas. An evaluation workshop was also held to plan activities prior to the initiation of broadcasting. The period of training for five teams, comprising sixty individuals, ran from April to August 1993, including the time required for preparatory arrangements and field activities.

The author of this article and the ICEPH Project Coordinator, Susana Pipkin, participated in the project on behalf of our organization. Numerous training functions and activities were conducted both in San Salvador and the rural sectors of five departments, in particular workshops, discussions, exercises, the connection of cables, the setting up of antennas, and the purchase of equipment. In our function as trainers during the months in question, the two of us were as absorbed in the joys and dramas of the people of El Salvador as any of the other participants, who all had one thing in common: none had any previous knowledge or experience in the running of a radio station. A number of the participants were in their twenties, and had grown up within the guerrilla milieu. Their experience was limited, and they had practically no formal education. On 21 August 1993, the first radio station was inaugurated in Suchitoto in the Department of Cuscatlan, and the Corporation of Community Radios of El Salvador began operating on a formal basis through low-powered transmitters (with an output of between 20 and 50 W), and with audio equipment that was more than rudimentary.

On 28 August, the second radio station was opened up in Teotepeque, in the Department of Libertad, and a few months later, the third station began operating in Victoria, in the Department of Cabañas.

At present, the Corporation has six radio stations which are waiting to receive official legal status, because they began operating with-

Photo: G. Gutiérrez

out permits or licenses, although with considerable involvement on the part of local authorities.

Some conclusions

ICEPH has also provided training to help other grassroots groups become agents of their own communication process: union officials, individuals from the community, and even professionals seeking to modify their praxis and become agents of social change. It is gratifying to see the spectacular results produced by neighbourhood or community radio stations that are organized and operated by the people themselves. But it is also encouraging to watch different groups gain new skills and open new horizons in the various media.

The first conclusion is simple but worth noting: Active individuals from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, some of whom can scarcely read or write, can indeed become good communication workers in community radio stations. People without any previous formal education soon prove capable of producing programmes, conducting research and interviews, assuming the role of radio announcer, taking part in dramatizations, performing technical operations, and acquiring the vital skills they need to express themselves effectively and with dignity.

The second conclusion concerns the content of training: Of primary importance is that the participants learn to read messages and find their own style, considering that it is the tendency at the start of any training to imitate and reproduce dominant patterns and presentations. Technical training follows in importance. It is a basic requirement and its popularity does not make it any less tedious.

The third conclusion is that it is imperative to conduct a good evaluation of the community environment where coverage is sought, because what the group says is relevant within that environment. That is the sphere where their language and interests will have to be understood. It does not pay to train communication workers to compete with the professional media. They should concentrate on their own community for their field of action because they face no other competition there.

The fourth conclusion is that the command of a medium of communication — even within a restricted area — is a powerful instrument for restoring a sense of worth not just for the actors, but for the entire community... »it is our people who are doing the talking...«

The fifth conclusion relates to methodology: the training of popular communication workers is an integral process. Isolated workshops that do not form part of a broader plan might benefit a few. More effective, however, is the training of popular communication workers as a group willing to engage in radio and communication activities geared to social change.

Because, and this is the sixth and last conclusion, training a group of communication workers is not merely an educational activity: It is an action that ignites a social process, and the team responsible must have a very definite concept for assessment and assistance, for experience has demonstrated that they will only succeed in encouraging those groups that are disposed to work towards transformation suited for consolidating civilian life and the value of each participating individual.

Additional information on community radio stations, including analyses and evaluations of diverse experiences, video documentaries, and recordings of radio programmes, is available through ICEPH at the following address:
ICEPH — Instituto Cordillerano de Estudios y Promocion Humana Castilla de Correo 24 El Bolsón (8430) Rio Negro Argentine Tel./Fax: +54 944 92790

»La Señal«

An FM Radio initiative — Looking back over the first year

»Face-to-face« radio

On June 7, 1994, the FM Radio Station *La Señal* completed its first year of regular broadcasting. Anniversaries in general are an occasion to reflect and evaluate — to look back. And that is the task at hand — to try and tell about our venture and what it means to us.

La Señal is the fruit of many years of communication and education efforts with the people of the region in an attempt to promote, motivate and support them towards action. It was our experience in working together with the people to develop the popular sectors that shaped our course of action. Accordingly, the following is a compilation of ideas and opinions expressed by the participants in that communication process. To our mind, their views better reflect what the radio station means for the region than any theories or accounts that we might present only from our perspective.

After the initial testing phase, a period of training for the broadcasting team and technical adjustments, the radio station for the community of *El Bolsón*, FM *La Señal*, went on the air.

And from the start, with the support of the World Association of Community Radio Stations, we joined the regional and Latin American networks and their work in this vast movement.

We opened our first broadcast with the following statement:

»Beginning today, FM *La Señal* will provide a continuous schedule of broadcasting (excepting on Sundays). We intend to be a station

Source of photographs: La Señal, Gráfica, Supplement of Number 3 - July 1994.

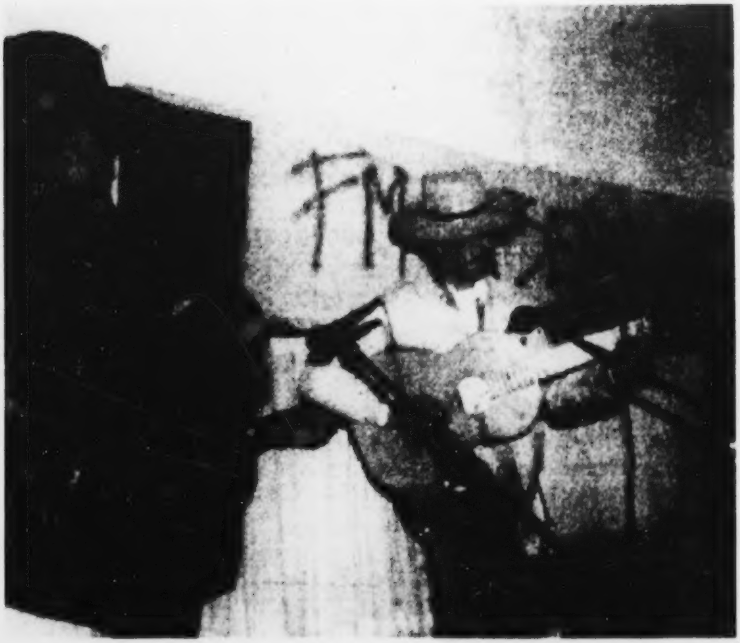
of the people, and we hope the work we are undertaking will be a lasting effort that will keep us well occupied. We are equipped with a microphone and the opportunity for communicating with one another so that we can grow a little closer and get to know each other better. We aim to take our broadcasts out into the street and become the voice of the people. We plan to converse with one another, to gather and listen to one another, to work towards the advancement of our small mountain community...«

In keeping with this aim, the radio station worked together with ICEPH (*Instituto Cordillerano de Estudios y Promoción Humana* — an Andean non-government institute for social studies and the promotion of people, located in El Bolsón, Río Negro, Argentina) to launch other activities and events in addition to its daily programme of broadcasting: regional folk music festivals as well as rock festivals for the youth, and, to a lesser extent, public debates, discussions, documentary video presentations, an International Women's Day, workshops for training popular correspondents — activities that go beyond the microphone and show what »face-to-face« radio can accomplish.

After working at this undertaking now for a year, we know we still have a long way to go, but we are not likely to change our course.

This is how we celebrated the first anniversary of *La Señal* in the midst of our people...

On Tuesday, June 7th, we proposed on the air that our listeners call or come in to tell us what they felt and thought about the radio station. From 9:30 AM, until we ceased broadcasting that day, we received a continuous stream of visitors, letters, calls and gifts. At the end of the day, we were sure in our hearts that what we had initiated a year earlier was held in common esteem by many people.



Enrique Caipillán (President of the Irigoyen Community Council):
»I considered it my obligation to come and congratulate you because this is a radio station of the people. We can come in at any time, and there is always room for us. I commend your work, and hope it continues: it is a good effort in the service of those who need it. The support it lends to people of humble circumstances gives them strength to keep on going.«

Gustavo Rivero (Luján Community Council):
»I wish to say that we are here to celebrate with you now, as we also are when we need to talk about the problems of our neighbourhood. We feel that this radio station is a positive development for El Bolsón, because it gives us a chance for direct communication

with our neighbours. We have never had any problems about talking — there has always been enough time, which carries a lot of weight, because community time frequently does not coincide with radio time. The Luján community expresses its appreciation and hopes to celebrate another 20 or 30 years with you!«

Victor Jara (Obrero Community Council):
»I wanted to come and congratulate you because in a way it was we who started the radio station, and we are still here after a year. I consider it a worthwhile venture. The people say what they think. The reality of our communities is becoming known, and no one has to take offence. On behalf of everyone from the community of Obrero, I would like to say that we are doing well and should carry on for many years to come.«

Juan Vargas (from the community of Usina):
»A special salute to *La Señal* for all the community work that it has been doing! It is a wonderful thing for the people to have a mouthpiece at their disposal that they can count on. The radio station has become a vital communication link, and every day it proves its worth.«

Ernesto Crivelli (Decan of Bariloche Regional University Centre, National University of Comahue):
»I wish you many more years of popular communication. Besides the best of luck and other good wishes, I offer our Centre's willingness to cooperate with ICEPH and the radio station. It is a chance for the University to bring new services to El Bolsón, needless to say, as long as we can count on you and your basic support.«

Marcelo Sánchez (Correspondent for »El Sobreviviente« in Buenos Aires):
»Many congratulations! Persevere for as long as possible! We are listening here to your recorded programmes. Carry on with your peoples' radio initiative.«

Miriam Mateos (member of the community):
»This is an anniversary for every resident of El Bolsón because it is the radio of the people.«

José Roberts (President, Usina Community Council):
»Best wishes on the completion of a year of community efforts. You always keep us well informed. All the members of the Council send their warm regards.«

Checho Martínez (Moderator of the programme Tiempo de Folklore produced by Radio Nacional):
»Congratulations on the first anniversary of FM *La Señal*. You have earned a place in the hearts of the people with your penchant for truth. There are occasions when one would like to speak the truth and can't, but at *La Señal* the channels of communication are open for the public to do so.«

Adriana del Agua (Secretary of Tourism):
»Double congratulations on News Correspondents' Day, and best of luck. Keep on growing at the pace you've grown. *La Señal* is one more forum where the people can express their views and take part. It gives neighbourhood communities the opportunity to say what they need beyond the scope of political issues that arise in our society.«

Iñes Zúñiga y Casimiro Huenelaf (popular musicians):
»Today is the 7th of June. Our radio transmitter, FM *La Señal* is celebrating its first year of existence, and I wish to extend my congratulations with much affection and love. Keep up the good work. Let's stay together always. To help celebrate the occasion, we have written a song for you. We are here to share this day with you, to wish you the best of everything for your radio station, and to express our solidarity.«

Alfonso Díaz y Silvia Vallejos (members of the group »Roto Chileno«):
»I had to come and congratulate you on behalf of our fellow Chileans. You have been working for one year now, and we always enjoy listening to your transmissions of the *cueca* and our *guarachitas* (popular dances and folk music of Chile). They go right to the heart, especially for us since we are away from our country. We will always be with you. To my mind, your radio broadcasts are first-rate. Everyone listens to them. And what's even more important, everyone in the popular sectors. That is why people come here. There are other radio stations that are nothing but a disgrace. But not yours. A person can come and say what he feels, he can discuss neighbourhood concerns, and others join in.«

Adrián Jara (community news correspondent and member of the radio team):
»I'd like to congratulate you all. The best thing a community can have is a community radio station. Ever since I became involved in radio, I feel that I am closer to everybody living in popular communities.«

Jorge Belanco (member of the community of Luján):
»Congratulations. Thank you for all the work you did this year. Thank you for your frankness. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for your human approach. Thank you for being dreamers. Thank you for putting your hearts into your work. Many, many thanks for being what you are.«

Rosa María Milutinovic (Interim Director of School No. 337 in the community of Usina):
»On behalf of the educational staff of School No. 337 in the community of Usina, congratulations on your first anniversary. We hope that for a long time to come we will be able to depend on this service that the media should offer to its community, its popular neighbourhoods and its people. Many thanks.«

La Posada (Taller de Arte El Sol, Carnicerías Néstor):
»Hoping that this day will be an occasion to celebrate for many years to come. A warm embrace and compliments on your daily broadcasts that are like building blocks for the construction of our community. Success and prosperity.«

Néstor Capano (Regional Legislator):
»On the occasion of the first anniversary of broadcasting by FM *La Señal*, I congratulate you with the greatest respect for the dedication you have shown in the programmes you send. It is my wish that this first year multiply into many more years of »radio-making«- helping us to grow while keeping us entertained and informed, and allowing us to express our opinions.«

Mónica Cacciavillani (from the region of Entre Rios, Lago Puelo):
»Dear Comrades, Friends and Facilitators of Communication, Best wishes of the day! It seems impossible that a year has already passed from those first steps that day by day with much dedication and interest in overcoming were being converted into a vital, joyful, dedicated activity — to relate for the first time what is happening to the people who live in the valley and the popular communities. What more can one say to you, you are in my house with my family, spending time together with us. Thank you for your work and carry on as before. Special congratulations for the programmes *La tarde de los Barrios, Encuentro de Mujeres, Ramos Generales, El Sobreviviente, De locos o cultos*. A good day for all. See you at the festival on Saturday. PS: You have the best music in town.«

We received a picture of a telephone drawn and cut out by Patricia, age 7, with the following message:

»Ring, ring, ring, ring
Hello, FM *La Señal*. It's Patricia calling.
We wish you a Happy Anniversary.«

Needless to say, there were also messages from affiliated fellow radio stations:

Roberto Arjias (FM Pocahullo, San Martín de los Andes):
»On your anniversary, we send you a collegial embrace, and wish you the best of luck. May you continue for many years to come to bring information to the community and the community closer together. Congratulations to all our colleagues and a very, very happy anniversary!«

Leonardo Jalil (FM Gente de Radio, Bariloche):
»Warm congratulations to FM *La Señal* on the completion of its first year. We want you to know that we are with you in spirit, supporting your efforts. Best wishes to our colleague from the North Patagonian Association of Popular Radio Stations for her part in reaffirming our commitment through the promotion of the truth over your esteemed radio station. We believe that it is becoming more and more necessary to strengthen the links of this chain of community radio stations that from different environments, towns and cities of our region turn this medium of communication into a permanent commitment with the people. An organ of the media that facilitates organization within the popular sectors opens up the means for people to filter what they have to say and to voice their own opinions.«

The celebration

Saturday, the 11th of June, we organized a folk festival with the participation of various popular musicians from around the region. More than 300 members of the community attended, sharing an evening of pure guitar and accordion, dancing, wine, and sandwiches (made by the members of the Solidarity Workshop). For the ICEPH team and FM *La Señal* it was evident that this organ of popular communication has won over everyone. Here are some of the improvised songs that were dedicated to us.

»I am here for the anniversary of a community broadcasting station whose import will grow with the passing years. Particularly for humble people like ourselves — humble, not poor. We keep on struggling, because if the people are united, our struggle won't be in vain. I wanted to be here at FM *La Señal* where every member plays an important part. Because I believe the honest work they are doing will give us much to talk about.«

»I bring a song of congratulation
To honour a radio broadcasting station.
And for the staff a cordial cheer
From everyone who's gathered here.
We come today with much esteem
To compliment a radio team,

And wish them all from day to day
Continued progress on their way.
The praises that we come to sing
For all the services they bring
Enjoy the same validity
For all in this community
Throughout the region all around
We prize the means that they have found
To talk about the way they feel
And express concerns that are so real
For everyone out there to hear
In every corner far or near.
When all my simple words are through
May their goodwill abide in you.
And so I strum this little song
On my guitar and sing along
I join the wish of one and all.
Enjoy your birthday, *La Señal!*«

In the spirit of a song composed and sung by Dionisio Zúñiga from the community of Esperanza

Inés Zúñiga (accordionist from the community of Usina)
»We are all here for a little party in honour of this wonderful radio station. To start with, I'm going to play a serenade out of the past, and I want everyone to come out and dance, because when there's an occasion to celebrate, it should be celebrated in style!«

»Good evening, you wonderful people
I've come here to join you
And share with all of you
An Argentine emotion right from the heart
Or to continue on the path we've taken
Here in my land of Patagonia
Good evening, all you wonderful people
Today in my hometown of El Bolsón

I extend my humble gratitude
To my great friend Tornero
And pay him my warmest compliments
As we share the same awareness
My feelings are ones of contentment
Just as anyone who sings
And so I join you with my verse
And extend my best wishes
To the community radio station, *La Señal*
The broadcasts I listen to most every afternoon
Bring me warmth like the glow of a burning hearth
And though I'm not much of anyone

I'll use the little I've learned
And commit myself to rhyme
To defend this region of mine
Tornero, my friend, together we'll strive
To keep El Bolsón from perishing!«
In the spirit of Don Alegría, a minstrel from Mallín Ahogado

Elvira Aguila (ICEPH staff member)
»When I travelled from El Hoyo
I marvelled at the hills and lakes
But when I arrived in El Bolsón
And saw *La Señal*, it was a new sign,
Like nothing I had ever experienced before!
Long live *La Señal!*«

ICEPH and FM *La Señal* are members of *Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias* AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Stations), *Asociación Norpatagónica de Radios Populares* (the North Patagonian Association of Popular Radio Stations), the network *»Radio Rural para los Paises en Desarrollo«* (Rural Radio Stations for Developing Countries), *Encuentro de Entidades No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo* (a conference of NGOs for Development), the network *»La Otra Bolsa de Valores«*, the network *»Radio Paz International/Radio International Feminista«*.

Sponsored by The AIDS Information and Support Center (TASC) based in Manzini, the largest city in Swaziland, the women of Lobamba were participating in a pilot series to introduce study circles on HIV/AIDS to rural Swazi women. Project HOPE, based in Millwood, Virginia, sponsors TASC and supported my visit to Swaziland. Project HOPE, with a worldwide network, sponsors TASC-like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on national health problems. The Swaziland project is supported by a grant from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Leonard P. Oliver directs Oliver Associates in Washington, DC, 3429 34th Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016, USA, a public-policy consulting firm. He is the author of »Study Circles: Coming Together for Personal Growth and Social Change«.

Leonard P. Oliver

Study circles on HIV/AIDS for Africa: Swazi women gain a public voice

»We're dying and our men don't care,« said one middle-aged Swazi woman seated on a mat in the village hut, adding: »We have to get to the Chief and to our men with this programme.« The women had come together for the study circle session in the village center, a thatched-roof, circular hut where the men and women of Lobamba regularly meet, although not together.

Preparing for the Swaziland visit

In the spring, 1994, Project HOPE asked me to develop a study circle programme on HIV/AIDS for Swaziland, targeting rural women. TASC had tried various types of educational programmes, including lectures, small group discussions, and videos to get the HIV/AIDS message across. Still, Swazis continued to infect each other at an alarming rate, going from a HIV-Positive rate of 1 in 7,000 in 1986, to 1 in 34 in 1992, and to 1 in 4 today. The prevalence of the HIV virus in the Swazi population frightens the Swazi authorities, the NGOs, and most importantly, the victims in the villages and towns. Most directly affected are the Swazi women, the projected audience for the Project HOPE-TASC study circle programme.

Project HOPE asked me to perform a three-fold task:

1. Develop an original pilot study circle curriculum programme on HIV/AIDS for rural Swazi women.
2. Develop a one-day training programme to train Swazi Agricultural Extension Workers (AEW) and Ministry of Health Rural Nurses (MOH) to become study circle leaders.
3. Test the pilot curriculum, using an indigenous leader, in a rural setting with Swazi women.

Here is how we completed these tasks in introducing study circles on HIV/AIDS to Swaziland and to Africa.

The Swaziland context

Swaziland is a former British protectorate, gaining independence in 1968. Officially known as the Kingdom of Swaziland, the country has a population of 800,000. The adult literacy rate is 67 percent. The official languages are English and siSwati. Some 77 percent of the population is rural, 23 percent urban.

Swaziland is landlocked, surrounded by South Africa except for a short border with Mozambique. The country is mineral rich, with a traditional rural economy characterized by subsistence agriculture. It is economically dependent on South Africa.

Swaziland is a monarchy, ruled by King Mswati III who governs under a constitution and a legislature. There are four political subdivisions. No political parties exist, and the country is essentially governed by the King, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet Ministers. Swaziland allows opposition groups to have offices in the two major cities. There is an active trade union movement (which shut down the largest sugar plantation during my visit) and two nationally circulated newspapers, which often print articles and letters dissenting with government policy.

Task 1
Developing a HIV/AIDS Study Circle Curriculum

My original intent was to teach the TASC officials how to write a study circle series on HIV/AIDS. Time did not permit this exercise, so I wrote a HIV/AIDS curriculum during two days locked in the New George where I was staying while in Manzini.

Study circle materials for discussion come in many forms, from simple questions to elaborate texts. Most importantly, the materials have to be catalysts for study circle discussion, not self-standing texts. For starters, I used the Study Circles Resource Center's excellent guide, »Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Materials«[1]. I also brought in materials from the Academy for Educational Development's (AED) AIDSCOM Project[2], and from Project HOPE's Swaziland experience. Pretrip discussions with officials from AED and the AFL-CIO's African-American Labor Center provided the context for my visit and the eventual pilot study circle series[3].

The final series of five sessions, including a Leader's Guide and Introduction to Study Circles in Swaziland, were brief, hard-hitting, combined facts with values, and brought up leading questions as a guide for the study circle leader. The final curriculum included:

- Leader's Guide
- Introduction to the Study Circle Series
- Sessions:
    1. Talking about HIV/AIDS
    2. Understanding HIV/AIDS and who gets it
    3. AIDS causes, detection, and prevention
    4. Government, institutions, and community roles in combatting AIDS
    5. Taking personal responsibility for AIDS prevention: Action steps
- Glossary.

Task 2
Training Swazi AEW/MOH personnel for study circle leadership

We employed a tested, effective one-day training programme for study circle leaders in the training of the AEW and MOH personnel. The training, titled »Study Circle Leadership Training Workshop«, was conducted for 17 local AEW and MOH leaders in the New George Hotel. It followed the training model we have developed for local communities and for trade unions interested in the training of study circle leaders and implementing a study circle programme.

The Leadership Workshop included an overview of study circle development in the U.S. and Sweden (where the concept has been pioneered and applied over the last century), an AFL-CIO video of a health care reform study circle in action, and direct participation of each trainee participant in the conduct of a study circle using the new HIV/AIDS curriculum. Participants led the study circle for brief stints, critiqued each other's performances, and learned by »hands-on« experience. Recorders were selected to provide the group memory and summaries of each session's discussion.

Participation by the AEW and MOH nurses proved high, as the training model requires strong trainee participation. Since this was the first time we have tested the Leadership Training model outside of the U.S., we were gratified that it had applicability in the Swazi setting.

Participant trainees are directly engaged in the learning. You cannot depend on lectures describing the study circle leader's role or modelling what a skilled study circle leader does. Cross-cultural communication depends on indigenous leaders adapting the format to their learning practices, to their styles of leadership, and to their setting.

Study circle leaders develop their own styles. They begin this process of choosing a comfortable style by first understanding the study circle principles and groundrules, and then by actively participating in leading a study circle and being critiqued. All 17 AEW and MOH participants were exposed in this manner to the dynamics of study circle leadership and to the TASC HIV/AIDS curriculum.

The one-day training workshop with the AEW and MOH women leaders had its own dynamic. I had to quickly master names such as »Nonkgneko«, »Jabula«, »Nomakosi«, »Queeneth«, and »Siphne«. Calling trainees by their first names is important to break down barriers to communication. I also had to learn the Swazi word for »timeout« — »Seyishayile«. The women, accustomed to village councils, adapted easily to the hollow-square format and the study circle groundrules that everyone has an equal voice, we respect each other's opinions, and we do not seek a vote or consensus. I was informed that these are also present in the village councils.

The trainees quickly joined the discussion using the HIV/AIDS text I had written for TASC. Some knew AIDS victims personally. They agreed on the need for testing. They got personal in describing their relationships with their men and their social lives. They worried about their teenage daughters, just as we do. They wanted more HIV/AIDS education in the schools. They talked about the increasing vulnerability of women.

Above all, they admitted the need for both Swazi women and men to alter their behaviours in the face of the HIV/AIDS threat. »How do I tell my husband to use a condom?« asked one participant, »How do we change our sexual behaviour?« The barriers to change are formidable — polygamous practices, manhood coming from having multiple lovers, religious strictures on sexual behaviour, and the universal resistance of their menfolk to education and change about HIV/AIDS.

All thought the government should be spending more funds on HIV/AIDS prevention, and they talked about ways to organize to bring about change, difficult in a male-dominated kingdom with an ineffective parliament. »We have to be more vocal in our communities, more demanding of government,« said another. »We have to get to our chiefs,« joined in another participant. Others said to start with the family, or »We'll be a society of old people trying to take care of younger, sick people. We have to talk frankly with our kids.«

The imperative for action came through loud and strong, from the family, to the churches, to the schools, and the village councils. They talked about running study circles in these institutions, using the TASC curriculum, because »AIDS will not wait for us to go slow — it's here!«

The HIV/AIDS study circle materials worked to structure the discussion. As we moved through the five sessions, the discussion became more personal and candid. They weren't threatened by personal disclosures and feelings about what would normally be extremely private views. An AEW participant observed: »The study circle will make my job easier. It's a new tool for us, going beyond our lectures and workshops on HIV/AIDS. We have to spread the idea.«

Task 3
Applying the study circle model in a rural Swazi village

The final stage for study circle implementation for rural Swazi women on the HIV/AIDS curriculum unfolded in the small, rural village of Lobamba, some 30 kilometers outside of Manzini in the rolling Swazi hills. After the training workshop, we asked one of the trainees to lead the Lobamba study circle session.

The study circle idea cannot be imposed on a culture or it will be ignored or outright rejected. In Swaziland, we were fortunate in that the Lobamba village women had a history of regular weekly meetings held under a »talking tree« just outside the village. I attended one of these weekly gatherings just a week before, under the tree, with 25 village women discussing HIV/AIDS followed by a craft demonstration led by the local AEW.

So the study circle idea, where circle members learn from each other and participate democratically, did not seem foreign to the 32 women of Lobamba gathered for the first pilot test of the study circle leader and the new HIV/AIDS materials. The idea wasn't foreign, but one that capitalized on centuries of tradition in the Swazi culture.

For the first study circle session, TASC, the AEW, and the Lobamba leaders chose to meet in the village communal hut. We walked into the dusty, brown-hued village to the hut where the women slowly took off their shoes, sat on straw mats, and prepared for the discussion. The hut was open to the elements, the business inside connected to the village beyond.

We set up our flip charts and generator for the videos we would use later. The entire proceeding was caught on video by a TASC intern. Several of the Lobamba women were literate and had read the materials. One volunteered to be the study circle recorder. Even with participants who are illiterate, the trained study circle leader can bring everyone into the discussion by following the text and using the questions prepared for each session. That's what happened in Lobamba.

We decided to concentrate on Session 1 to elicit personal testimony, encourage the women to talk freely, and to humanize the HIV/AIDS issue through personal identification.

Accustomed to lectures and videos, the Lobamba women were slow to warm to the study circle process. But seated facing each other, they gradually started to tell their own stories about HIV/AIDS, overcoming their fear of strangers and anxieties about such a personal issue.

Just as the women had done in the previous training workshop, the Lobamba women talked about people from the village who had AIDS and their symptoms. One of the great obstacles, it appears, are the »traditional healers« who carry razor blades for incisions so they can apply their herbs and ointments. The razors are reused, possibly transmitting the HIV virus to others.

They discussed the need for more information and education, especially for the chief and the men who met in their own village councils. »Men are difficult to talk to about sex,« said a young woman, »and it takes a long time just to figure out how to approach them.« They talked about reaching men through their sports clubs (mainly soccer), the bars, and the job sites, especially construction sites where men are often far from home. Some even voiced fears that their men would hear about the conversation in the hut and become angry. One shyly admitted that she had talked about condom use with her husband and he promptly called her a prostitute. But she got him to a TASC HIV lecture »and from that point on he started to use the condom«.

All in the hut seemed to realize the gravity of the situation regarding HIV/AIDS in Swaziland and that education was the key. After several hours of talk, several women exploded in indignation. It was no longer someone else's issue. The Lobamba women realized it was their issue. Based on the national data, 6 or 7 of the 32 women were HIV-positive, although no one had yet been tested.

»When we go from here,« said a participant, »we have to share this education with our extended family, with our chief, and with the men's groups. We're dying and our men don't care!« This dramatic comment led to a lengthy discussion about the women's vulnerability and the major obstacles in preventing and combatting HIV/AIDS in Swaziland: (1) the male-held myths about multiple lovers and the use of condoms; (2) the prevalence of polygamy; and (3) the lack of a government and public commitment to a broad-based educational programme. Add to these factors the use of the dirty razors by the traditional healers, the lack of widespread testing, contaminated blood transfusions, mothers passing the virus on to their babies, and the opposition of the Catholic Church to condom use and the scope of the epidemic takes on a dramatic and frightening character.

The women left the hut after three hours of non-stop discussion. They agreed to take a summary of the minutes of the discussion to their chief and the men's council, an action few would have advocated prior to the meeting. They seemed to gather strength from each other as the session progressed, emboldened and empowered, and willing to act collectively for their survival. By speaking out candidly before peers in the non-threatening study circle atmosphere, they were building within themselves the capacity for participation, for having a »public voice«, and for deriving collective action from the collective learning that took place.

As they were leaving, one asked pointedly, »what happens in a society when the women are ahead of the men?« The study circle had given them one answer — become an informed public through deliberation and act on the knowledge. A powerful lesson.

Potential for study circles in Swaziland and Africa

Swaziland is not alone in its inability to confront the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is happening throughout Africa, with whole villages wiped out by the disease. Compounding the situation is the patriarchal nature of Swazi society, where the women lack the formal power of authority. Study circles cannot be a panacea in this setting, they are only a start, assisting individuals, communities, NGOs, and governmental organizations with participatory and democratic educational programmes. The study circle might even be perceived as a threat to the authoritative rule in Swaziland by the King, the Ministers, and the local chiefs.

What is needed is for indigenous organizations like the churches, the schools, the village councils, and the NGOs to willingly adopt the study circle model for their own work, both on HIV/AIDS and other issues, in order to institutionalize the process and offer citizens a public voice.

My experience in Swaziland, particularly in the Lobamba village, demonstrated that average citizens, many of whom are illiterate, will come out for programmes that affect their lives and capacity to govern themselves. The study circle is one proven model to reach these goals. The women of Lobamba village were forced to confront HIV/AIDS, not indirectly as something that happens to others, but directly affecting their own lives. Their willingness to talk openly, even in the presence of strangers, and their willingness to act collectively, even with the lack of authority and the fear of retribution, demonstrated the depth of the HIV/AIDS issue and the power of the study circle to elicit a dramatic response.

TASC officials became aware of the potential of the study circle for their work, and are considering ways to promote the concept in their programmes. They talked about publishing the HIV/AIDS study circle curriculum, producing a training video from the training workshop and the village experience, and using the study circle model in their work. The effort, if it is to succeed, will require funding, people with initiative, and a willingness to promote a new model for adult education.

If the study circle idea can be adopted in Swazi villages, it has potential throughout African countries facing equally troubling issues. The Swazi lessons that can be generalized to other African countries and communities are as follows:

- **Study circle materials:** The materials have to be simple, straightforward, with few abstractions. They should be no more that 2-3 pages for each session, and designed to get people talking. Statistics, tables, and other data can be used, but sparingly. Examples from the indigenous culture should be employed to illustrate points. And the questions should be used as guides to further discussion.

- **Study circle leadership training:** Prior commitment of all trainees should be obtained by the sponsor. The training can take one day, and should be participatory, affording each trainee an opportunity to lead a session with the new materials.

Peer critique is essential to the training, and participants should be made to feel that such critiques are part of the learning process. Trainees should be able to make a commitment to conduct study circles with their members and constituencies.

- **Study circle implementation:** The study circle series should be pilot-tested with the knowledge that some participants may be illiterate or semi-literate or may not have been able to read the materials in advance. Graphics can help. Flip charts are universal and essential to present ideas and record participants' views. Local organizers should be assigned to recruit participants. Trained leaders should lead the study circles. And participants should commit for all five sessions for continuity.

The Swazi experience in retrospect

Study circles are still in the experimental stage for Africa, although previous Swedish programmes in Tanzania on literacy in the late 1960s proved highly successful. The study circle capitalizes on indigenous formats for tribal and community democracy such as the council meeting, as happened in Swaziland. Some of the benefits from the Swazi experience with study circles on HIV/AIDS were evident even in the short time we had on the project:

- **Informed adults:** The rural Swazi women came away more informed about HIV/AIDS, assumed ownership of the issue, and expressed a personal commitment to act.
- **Identification with the sponsoring organization:** The AEW and MOH leaders acknowledged TASC's sponsorship of the study circle training and the HIV/AIDS series, as did the Lobamba women. Legitimacy and trust are important when dealing with such a sensitive issue, and by promoting the study circles, TASC continued to establish itself as an organization that cares about the HIV/AIDS issue.

- **Building capacity to act:** The Lobamba women gained a public voice through their participation in the study circle and seemed ready to act at the end of the session. By speaking out, by taking ownership of the issue, and by expressing a willingness to act, the Lobamba women were acting in their civic and public capacities.

- **New leadership can emerge:** Often, people who haven't had an opportunity to speak up in public, who have great depth but no formal leadership role, only need an occasion for their leadership talents to emerge. The study circle, with its emphasis on equality of participation and respect for others' opinions, whether we agree or disagree, provides an ideal setting for leadership talents to be displayed. In Lobamba, one of the women who took the notes and made the final report said she had never done that before, but welcomed the role and the opportunity.

- **Encouraging a commitment to act collectively:** After a few study circle sessions, our experience is that members want to find ways to solve problems, to act on the learning they have experienced, to move collectively and do something about the issue. We only had the one session in Lobamba, but there was a consensus that something had to be done about HIV/AIDS in the village, and the collective group seemed prepared to act and to take the issue to the chief, the mens' council, and their own menfolk. There was no evidence that they felt this way prior to the study circle session — they had to come to it through this collective learning process.

Study circles on HIV/AIDS in Africa will take time, funds, indigenous leadership, and a commitment to try a new idea. From this initial foray into Africa with an HIV/AIDS study circle programme, I am, in common with officials from TASC and Project HOPE, encouraged that the experiment will go forward.

Notes

1. Available from the Study Circles Resource Center, Pomfret, CT (203) 928-2616.
2. The Academy is located in Washington, DC. The AIDSCOM Project is part of AED's Support for the Research and Analysis in Africa project.
3. I am indebted to Dr. Margery Souder, Project HOPE, Dr. Lorraine Lathen-Parker, Director of AED's Women in Development Program, and Mr. Michael Lescault, Regional Director, African-American Labor Center, AFL-CIO.

There is much talk of participation and participatory approaches in adult education and related activities within the social sciences and the field of social work. Often enough, however, we feel that it is more an exercise of rhetoric than a reflection of reality. One obvious obstacle to real participation is that people on the community level usually lack the technical skills required to participate effectively. Nevertheless, if the approach is right, it becomes possible for them to overcome their limitations, especially when their fundamental concerns are addressed.

In the following article, which we found in the April 1995 edition of the magazine »La Chiva«, there is a description of a particularly interesting participatory exercise on a matter of vital concern for indigenous people in Panama, and elsewhere in the world as well: the use of their land. The project was conducted in cooperation with the Centre for Panamanian Studies and Social Action (Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño CEASPA). CEASPA is a member organization of the Latin American Council for Adult Education (Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina) CEAAL.

Nicanor González / Francisco Herrera / Mac Chapin

DARIEN — The map of participation

Thirty years ago, the eastern part of Panama was largely covered with virgin forest and inhabited by three groups of indigenous peoples: the Emberás, the Wounaan, and the Cunas, as well as by small colonies of Panamanians or people of »Afro-mestizo« extraction. Meanwhile the region has been converted into a battleground where indigenous groups are struggling to halt the invasion of loggers, ranchers, and landless colonists drawn there from the country's interior. Since the construction of the Bayano hydroelectric dam, and the extension of the Pan American Highway to the city of Yaviza during the mid 1970s, the region's abundant forests have declined rapidly, depleting the local population's basis for survival. And now a new threat is posed by the proposed completion of the last segment of the highway from Panama to Colombia.

As a first measure in the search for solutions to deal with the situation, the General Congresses of the Emberá, Wounaan and Cuna peoples, colaborated with the Centre for Panamanian Studies and Social Action (*Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño* CEASPA), to conduct a participatory project with the object of mapping the indigenous territories in the Province of Darién. The methodology for the project was adapted from a similar mapping project developed in 1992 by the MOPAWI organization in the region of the Miskito people of Honduras. The indigenous groups along the eastern coast of Panama are better organized than the Miskito groups, and exercised strong control of the project from the start.

From May to October 1993, a team comprising cartographers and 22 indigenous »surveyors« from communities throughout the region elaborated maps detailing the geography of the region as well as the features and use of the land. Each surveyor took charge of one »zone« that encompassed from three to six communities[1], thus covering all the territory inhabited and used by the indigenous groups for their survival.

The map was prepared in three stages, each combined with a workshop. The first stage commenced in the Emberá community of Arimae, where Andrés Leake (a co-coordinator from the Miskito mapping project), Nicanor González of Tierras Nativas, and three indigenous coordinators — Genaro Pacheco and Facundo Sanapí, both of Emberá background, and Geraldes Hernándes, a member of the Cuna people — met with the surveyors, who had been per-

Source: La Chiva, April 1995

sonally selected by the leaders of the indigenous groups. Together they drafted two questionnaires, one on the use of natural resources, and the other on population and housing. During evening hours, the surveyors tested the questionnaires on the residents of the community where they met to revise their questionnaires and adjust them to the reality of the region. This also gave them practice in the task of explaining the project to the persons they planned to interview.

After a week of preparation, the surveyors went into the field, where they made a complete census, filled out the questionnaires, and collected detailed cartographic data from their respective zones.

They travelled by bus over land, by canoe on rivers, and by foot along muddy paths. They were plagued by rain, insects, hunger and exhaustion. The tools of their work were a green plastic folder with a few sheets of loose bond paper for taking notes, a pencil, a pencil sharpener and a pen. Most important were the three sheets of manila paper, 60 cm by 80 cm, for drawing their maps. They did not use official government maps for their work because they wanted to stimulate the people they interviewed to make their own sketches and create their own symbols. When working out in the field, they carried their drawings carefully packed in a section of plastic tubing sealed with a rubber stopper.

With the cooperation of the people in the villages, and their elders in particular, the surveyors elaborated meticulous maps of the river systems and the areas where the people hunt, fish, cut firewood, collect construction materials, and search for medicinal herbs and foods from the forest. Accordingly, the maps are a product of indigenous geographical experience, a sort of »ethno-cartography«. Needless to say, some maps were better than others; the better ones, elaborated with great detail and admirable artistic talent, are works of art of significant scientific value. It soon became evident for the people that the maps would provide them with a greater foundation of security for confronting the future.

Armed with this information, the surveyors came together for a second workshop where they met with Peter Herlihy, a geographer from the University of Kansas, who also worked on the MOPAWI project in Honduras and who had many years of experience in Darién, and various cartographers from the »Tommy Guardia« National Geographic Institute and the University of Panama. Together they worked in intensive sessions to elaborate maps based on interpretations of aerial photographs and the maps plotted in the communities. The surveyors transferred the information from the questionnaires and all the knowledge they could muster to the new maps, including the indigenous names for the rivers and important places, and locations of natural resources.

After three weeks, the surveyors returned to their zones for new consultations with the communities to collect information they were missing and correct errors on the maps. Then they returned to the third workshop where the maps were given a final touch. The outcome was a master map of the entire indigenous territory of Darién, on a scale of 1:500.000 and 22 maps of the various zones, on a scale of 1:250.000 that plot all the river systems and indicate how the land is used.

According to the national cartographers who participated in the project, the effort constitutes the most ambitious of its kind in the region, and has produced the most accurate representations of the territory in existence. It is the first cartographic undertaking that describes the characteristics of the land used by the indigenous people for their survival, and the ways in which those people manage the natural resources of the region. For many years, no aerial photographs could be made of Darién due to the permanent cloud cover; consequently, official maps were nothing more than mere approximations. An additional accomplishment of the experience in Panama was the extension of map-making methods to include maximum participation on the part of the local population, an innovation which resulted in a product of great scientific value. But beyond considerations from a scientific perspective, the maps are also valuable in a practical sense as a strategic weapon for the protection of indigenous lands and the conservation of natural resources. The methodology in question is one that can be easily adapted by any indigenous group to create maps of their respective territories.

When the work was completed, a forum was organized by the Emberá, Wounaan and Cuna communities to present their maps together with their assessment of the area's survival efforts, resource management, and socio-political organization. The forum entitled »Indigenous Culture and Resources — Indigenous Lands in Darién 1993: Survival Zones«, which was held at the Hotel El Panamá in Panama City on 26 and 27 October 1993, was attended by more than 500 persons, including government officials, representatives of other indigenous groups from Panama and other countries of South and Central America, conservation groups, and international guests.

The final map of Darién, which is scheduled for completion by April 1995, is the property of the Emberá, Wounaan, and Cuna communities. It will demonstrate the close relation between the area's remaining natural vegetation, its indigenous settlements, and the way the land is used. The data will play a crucial role in the discussions initiated by the indigenous people concerning the future of their region which is on the brink of massive and potentially devastating change.

Notes

1. The size of a zone varied according to the amount of territory »manageable« by the surveyor in charge of it. Peter Herlihy, a geographer from the University of Kansas, described it as a »socioeconomic unit«.

ASOCIACION ALEMANA PARA LA COOPERACION EN LA EDUCACION DE ADULTOS
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»...During the past two years our office has been working in the department of Tolima to support a number of small community development projects in the indigenous village of »Vuelta del Río«. Assistance has been channelled, among other things, into a community produce cooperative, literacy courses, agricultural training for village representatives, self-help groups, and legal counselling. The cooperation arrangement was intended to continue until the end of the present year. For the past several months, however, an oppressive wave of terror that has already claimed the lives of several people has instilled confusion, fear, and despair in the indigenous population of the region. Large landholders have been resorting to brutal methods to assert their control over property which in 1994 the government officially recognized as indigenous territory. A hit list is known to exist marking the lives of thirty-six indigenous representatives from the area, fourteen of whom are members of the Vuelta del Río community. Two of the persons whose names were on the list have already been murdered. Many families have decided to leave the area and move to other regions. Under the present conditions, a continuation of this promising community development endeavour is no longer possible...«

Adult education is concerned with the most vital needs and requirements of human existence. Hardly anything can be more vital than personal security from physical assault and even assassination. This fundamental human right, however, is not guaranteed in many countries of the world where just the opposite is true, and people become victims of systematic aggression for ethnic, social, or political reasons.

What this can mean for the practice of adult education becomes obvious from a letter sent to us last year by Siegfried Klante, who was in charge of our Colombian project of cooperation at the time.

Alfonso Palma, a Pijao Indian from Huila, active in the National Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Colombia (Organización Nacional de Indígenas de Colombia ONIC), describes the Colombian situation and what can be done to overcome it.

Alfonso Palma
Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)

Violence and impunity — our daily bread

Colombia, a republic in northwestern Latin America with a population of 34 million, is one of the three most violent countries of the world.

From twenty-four thousand to twenty-six thousand deaths occur there every year as the result of political violence. The victims are important political figures as well as leaders of the various political parties, organizations and social sectors.

Over the past four years, the Indigenous Movement has witnessed the assassination of ninety of its indigenous leaders. None of the assassins have been brought to justice, even though in two cases the parties who planned and carried out the crime are known.

Military forces, guerrilla forces, the drug mafia, death squadrons organized by landholders, and killers hired by politicians have all played a role in the long chain of crimes committed against the indigenous movement in the Departments of Cauca, Tolima, Córdoba, César, Nariño and Arauca.

But what are the roots of the problem?

Where indigenous peoples are concerned, the principle underlying factors are:

- **Political**

Indigenous communities have been progressively organizing all aspects of their daily life. In political matters, they have demonstrated solidarity with many political factions.

The National Constitutional Assembly, at which three indigenous representatives participated in 1991, was the first authentic show of joint political action. Indigenous representatives spoke out not only on ethnic issues, but on all other problems facing the country.

Since then, indigenous representatives have become active in municipal councils, town and city administrations, assemblies at the department level, the house of representatives and the senate, achieving positive results. There are meanwhile some 118 indigenous town councillors, twelve mayors, three representatives to the national assembly, and two senators.

The development is a troubling one for leaders or bosses of the different traditional political parties throughout the country. Independent political forces or civilian movements like the ones being created by former constituents constitute a threat to their authority.

Economic and territorial

Settlers, large landholders, cattle raisers, the drug mafia, the tourist trade, oil companies, and even the State all have an eye on indigenous territories. They are constantly invading and occupying those territories to exploit the rich wildlife, vegetation, minerals, and the beauty of the land there. The productive potential of the land in some places makes the territories very attractive to large capital.

Since indigenous territories, to a large extent, are very remote from the country's power centres, they are susceptible to all types of crime. Force is the prevailing means of gaining territorial control in the various regions.

What is the State doing?

The judicial organs of the government itself (the Attorney General's Office and Public Prosecutor's Office) admit that for every thousand claims filed to prosecute violations of human rights, only three are fully investigated so that the violators can be brought to justice. The remaining cases wind up being suspended.

Members of the military cannot be prosecuted in civil courts, since they are subject to special military law, and cases against them are heard in military courts. In most cases, members of the military are acquitted of charges. Very few are convicted.

What is being done and what remains to be done?

The goal is peaceful cohabitation. The issue of violence and human rights is very complex and difficult, for every region has its own unique conditions and circumstances. Nevertheless, the time has come to initiate a national strategy and embark on a nationwide learning process.

The government must exert a real effort to reach the poorest families and create opportunities for

- cultural development
- economic development
- education and employment
- affordable health assistance
- developing channels of communication and infrastructures
- obtaining financial assistance and credits at accommodating interest rates and convenient terms of payment
- providing peasants and indigenous people with land in complementary integral programmes.

The other problems of violence call for a campaign on human rights stressing the right to life and promoting respect for life, respect for ideas, political pluralism and tolerance. Forums, workshops, reunions, assemblies, conferences, and discussions in the media could serve as the means toward that end.

In connection with indigenous issues:

- The recovery of indigenous territories is the main concern. Potentially conflictive non-indigenous individuals must be evicted. Non-indigenous persons must not be allowed to occupy indigenous lands unless peaceful cohabitation is guaranteed and occupancy is authorized by the indigenous authorities and communities.

- The government must design a programme to allocate sufficient territories for the 84 different indigenous groups living in Colombia.
- It is also up to the government to finance programmes in education, health and vocational training to foster the development of the various groups in accordance with their respective cultures and under autonomous management.
- Indigenous communities must have access to channels that meet their approval for commercializing the products they produce.

As far as concerns other problems of a national dimension, a number of years ago, indigenous groups entered a process of dialogue and negotiation with certain guerrilla groups. Recently, the process was expanded a nationwide basis and on a larger scale to also include paramilitary groups, self defence groups, the drug mafia, and other such groups operating on the fringe of legality.

We hope the process will bring results. We also hope that it will involve the participation of the civilian population, which often suffers the most in armed confrontations between guerrilla groups, the drug mafia and government military forces.

The people of Colombia are tired of violence and war. We want peace, but peace with social justice. And that will require investments on the part of the government to solve the grave problems plaguing the nation.

We should not copy or import models that have served other countries. Colombia must conduct its own diagnostic, analyze its own reality, and go on from there to fashion its own solutions.

This article documents the experiences of the author during his work with a hill tribe in northern Thailand, developing basic literacy material for the illiterates of the tribe in their own language. The paper was presented at a Second Sub-Regional Workshop on Development of Basic Literacy Reading Materials for Minority Peoples in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO and UNESCO-PROAP, Bangkok in February-March 1994.

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Varsha Das

Education for minority tribes: Hope for success

A dusty road, two kilometres long, which stretched out like the branch of a main tree trunk, led a group comprising eight different nationalities to a small tribal village, Ban Hey Go, in the northern hills of Thailand. It was a village of the Lisu tribe.

Hill tribe villages in Thailand are normally located in mountainous areas, 500-1000 metres above sea level, near a year-round water source, surrounded by forest and sufficient land for cultivation. The huts are made of bamboo, mud and straw with thatched roofs. The main tribes in this region are the Akha, Lisu, Lahu, Meo, Yao and Karen. They have their own distinct languages, dress, beliefs and traditions. Yaos use Chinese characters for writing their language. Others do not have their own script but the Akha and Lisu use scripts based on the Roman alphabet, introduced by Christian missionaries. Hill tribes are generally animists, but some are Buddhists and Christians.

The purpose of our visit to Ban Hey Go was to survey the village and the tribe in order to develop basic literacy material for Lisu illiterates. The programme was organised under the aegis of the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO, Tokyo; UNESCO-PROAP, Bangkok, and the Ministry of Education, Government of Thailand.

Ban Hey Go is a small village of 26 huts and 31 households. The main occupation of the villagers is farming. All men and women below the age of 50 go to the fields to work and those above 50 stay at home to look after the children and do household chores. Women do some weaving and embroidery in their spare time, and sell their beautiful bags, belts, etc. to the tourists visiting the village.

Since 1991, the Non-formal Education Department of the Thai Government has been running a non-formal education centre in the village to educate Lisu children. Only those who are seven years of age and above attend pre-school and grade 1 classes at the centre, where they are taught only in Thai. The teacher, who is paid by the government, lives in the village in a small room at the centre. The centre has a blackboard, some charts, maps, and several hundred books in Thai, which are nicely arranged but of hardly any use.

The same centre is used at night for adult literacy and elementary education for adults. Since these classes are also in Thai the adult illiterate population of the village is not able to take advantage of them. Only young boys in their teens, who have to interact with Thai officials with regard to forest and land protection, etc., make use of the night school. These boys work under the guidance of the elders of the village for the welfare of their tribe and environment, and communicate with Thai officials and visitors.

The teacher at the non-formal centre does not know Lisu, nor is he familiar with the tribal customs and beliefs. Hence, it is a learning process for him as well. he cannot be successful if the villagers do not find him acceptable. Life is quite tough and challenging for him, but with the help of a two-way process he manages to survive and attain his goal.

As soon as we reached the village we were received by the teacher from the non-formal education centre and a few villagers, including the elderly men and women and a group of young boys who formed the village committee.

Later, we were to move freely around the village and to collect the information required through observation and interaction.

In whichever hut I entered, I found poverty. People were surviving with minimal clothing, utensils and furniture. Children had running noses, bare chests or patched shirts, but were quite playful and full of enthusiasm to learn. All the villagers had pride in their faces. Even in poverty they did not show a beggarly expression or attitude.

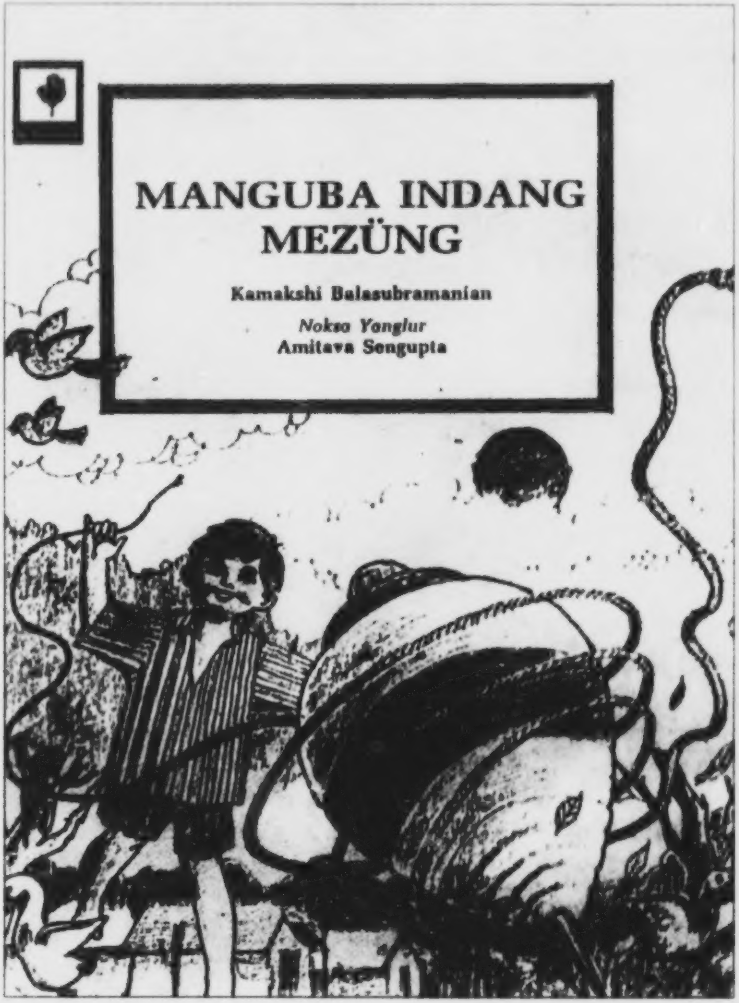
Two or three young boys accompanied us as we moved around, sometimes in a group of two or three, and at times singly. The boys would translate Lisu into Thai and our interpreter would translate Thai into English. This is how we conversed.

I entered one hut which looked quite clean, and the inhabitants seemed in a better economic situation. There was a guitar in a corner. At my request a young boy, Oror, played the guitar and sang a song in Lisu. Its music was Western. It was a Church song. I then wanted to hear a local instrument. Immediately, Oror produced a bamboo flute called a *furu* and his friend played a beautiful folk tune on it. I had recorded the guitar on my tiny tape-recorder. I also recorded the *furu*.

From there I started strolling on my own. I entered a hut. It looked large and had beautiful flowers in the courtyard. It was by the side of a church. A Lisu boy of about 18, Samuye, was sitting inside. He welcomed me with a smile. The room was big, but light could enter only through the door. I found a few wooden benches, a small wooden table and a blackboard with writing on it in the Roman alphabet. Some letters were different, and some looked inverted. Samuye and I spoke in sign language. He told me that it was Lisu script. I asked if he had any books in Lisu. He showed me a copy of the Bible published by The Bible Society of Thailand in 1987. It was a big thick book printed in very small type. He also had a book of Church songs in Lisu published in Myanmar. And that was all.

Later, with the help of an interpreter I learnt that the Lisu language was taught by Samuye's father. He was the priest of the church. Only two elderly men went to learn Lisu at night because they aspired to read the Bible. Samuye had also learnt Lisu from his father. This inspired me to develop basic learning materials in Lisu.

Lisu or, for that matter, any other language except Thai is not encouraged by the Thai Government in the interest of national unity and security. We were discouraged throughout from preparing any learning materials in tribal languages, but during our visit to Ban Hey Go I could clearly see that unless the villagers were taught in Lisu they would remain illiterate. They could not understand Thai and were rather averse to it because they were pressurised to



MANGUBA INDANG MEZÜNG

Kamakshi Balasubramanian

Nokso Yanglur
Amitava Sengupta

»Mangu's top« in Ao Naga.

adopt Thai names and speak Thai in order to get Thai citizenship, which would make them eligible for many other benefits.

When I asked Samuye whether he would like to have some basic literacy materials in Lisu, he was dumbstruck. No one could ever imagine this, and moreover it was prohibited! Samuye had no answer. I changed my strategy and started asking about the problems in their day-to-day life. He immediately opened up. He told me about water-borne diseases, particularly diarrhoea amongst children. The health of young and old was a matter of great concern in the village. There was no dispensary, but Samuye's father gave herbal medicines to the villagers. His was the only house which boiled drinking water. There were only two toilets in the village, one at the non-formal education centre and the other at Samuye's house.

I was indeed very fortunate to have spotted Samuye and to have been able to have an initial dialogue with him without an interpreter. We decided to invite him to Chiang Rai to help us with the materials.

On our return to Chiang Rai group members listed their observations by topic. It was unanimously felt that there were two main issues to be highlighted, namely, preservation of Lisu culture and language, and health. Hence we worked on two different formats. A playing-card-game was prepared on health, and pictorial story-telling cards on Lisu handicrafts. I personally concentrated on the story-telling cards.

We prepared a set of six cards. The title was **Our Own Art for a Better Life**. There were visuals on the left and a few words on the right. Each card had an elaborate text on the back for the teacher to explain the topic further and to have a dialogue or a discussion with the learners.

I would have preferred all the six cards to be only in Lisu but since we were working with Thai Government officials and we did not want to go against their policy, and thereby create confusion or friction, all the cards were bilingual, including the text for the teacher.

The very first card contained the title — **Our Own Art for a Better Life**. Samuye said, »A better life for the Lisu means more money.« I got the message. »A better life« would be an abstract term, while »more money« was concrete, tangible, and had a direct relationship with art. Hence in Lisu the title was **Our Own Art for More Money**. The text for the teacher explained the title: »Lisu handicraft is very beautiful. We make nice things in our spare time. By selling them we get money. And with that money our life becomes more comfortable. Lisu art is rich. We must preserve and promote it.«

The second card showed various items in pictures and the text was »We have beautiful things.« The third, »Where can we sell?«, showed a tourist bus in the village, some foreigners standing near the bus and Lisu women running up to them with items in their hands. The text for the teachers slowly opened the issue of having pride in one's own culture. It said, »At present tourists come to the village. We run up to them with our items of handicraft. There is no fixed price. So we don't always get good money.« The fourth card said, »Let us have shops«. And the teacher elaborated: »It would be better to have shops. We can display our items properly, with a fixed price for each item. The tourists will come to us to buy. This system has more dignity.«

The fifth card said, »More money makes life better.« »Life better« was put as »happier«. And when I asked Samuye, »What would make a Lisu happy?«, he said, »If a Lisu has enough money to buy salt, soap, shoes, utensils, better seeds for vegetables and fruit trees, and better tools for agriculture, he will be happy.« Samuye's reply was taken as the text for the teacher with a concluding remark that »that will make our life happy and healthy.«

The text of the last card was »Our art is our pride.« Here, we had earlier used the word »culture«, but it was Samuye again who shifted us from abstract to concrete. The text for the teacher said: »Therefore, it is important to preserve and promote our art. It is our culture, our life, our handicraft, dance, music, costume, family life, all these are very special to the Lisu people. We are proud of them.« The group decided to cut a cardboard carton and make a »television box« out of it. Six sets were prepared for field-testing. Samuye was our coordinator and instructor. Seeing him at the helm of affairs, villagers got together in no time. I switched on the tape-recorder and played the Lisu music recorded earlier. The guitar and Oror's voice were accepted placidly, but as soon as the *furu* music began there were smiles and joy on each and every face. All the villagers immediately felt comfortable and relaxed.

Samuye showed the first title card and explained about the topic in Lisu. Another copy was displayed on the TV box, and the rest were distributed to the members of the audience. The Lisu text on the title card was read aloud by a few men immediately. Samuye read it again and asked the women to join in reading. They all read it again and again. Each display of the card was followed by a discussion based on the text given on the back. Since the discussion was in Lisu, everyone participated.

After that Samuye started reading Thai and asked all to join in. The women could not participate. At his insistence they started repeating Thai words, but some of them kept quiet and others uttered unclear sounds with a lot of effort. This reaction was expected because they were forced to speak in a language they did not understand. Not only that, switching over from their own language to an unknown one created confusion and distraction. Hence, Samuye was asked to carry on only in Lisu.

In the discussion, the women did say that they would prefer to have shops because they would be more organised. They could display their things properly and fix the price. They said that they were not satisfied with what they were doing. They could do better. For that they needed better material and marketing facilities, and they would like to gain more knowledge about their craft. They would

NEHRU BAL PUSTAKALAYA

Bapu-a
Nun Atanga
Thawnthute Chu

Uma Shankar Joshi

Lem Ziaktu
Mickey Patel

»Stories from Bapu's life« in Mizo.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

like to learn what other tribes were doing and what might sell well in the cities.

With respect to the literacy materials, they said that they would like to have more material in Lisu because they could easily understand it. Most of the women held the cards in their hands and read the Lisu script again and again. There was pride and joy in their faces. They did not want to pass them on to others. Perhaps they held a written word which they could read and understand, for the first time, and they did not want to part with it.

When we told them that we would leave the TV box and the cards with them, one woman quickly stood up and said: »If you leave the material here, I will practise reading every day and when you come here again, you will see me reading Lisu fluently. Without reading ability, I feel like a buffalo or a cat. I cannot communicate with others.«

Some men said that so far they had had all the material only in Thai. They were proud to see their language, Lisu, along with Thai.

Samuye announced his determination with tears welling up in his eyes: »I will develop more such material in Lisu so that all the Lisu will become literate and educated.«

Samuye's determination brought tears of joy to many eyes. Samuye, who joined our group as a resource person on Lisu culture and language, worked as a translator, became trained in the complete process of material development, worked as an instructor and coordinator in the village and proclaimed that he would lead the Lisu village of Ban Hey Go to the light of literacy. To identify a person from the tribe and train him through such a process is perhaps the best method to achieve the desired results. Samuye became the change agent.

Samuye's determination is echoed in many hearts elsewhere. Almost all the participating countries face the problem of educating minority people.

Minority language communities in other Asian countries

China has 55 minority communities comprising 8.4% of the total population. Basic education for minority people in China is bilingual and specific guidelines were drafted for their educational development and reform in 1992. Indonesia has more than 350 local languages. Innovative learning material has been developed with a flexible approach to eradicating illiteracy. Laos has diverse ethnic groups divided into three main categories: the Lao Loum group constitutes 55% of the population, occupying the lowland plains; another group, the Lao Theung, comprises 27%, and the Lao Soung constitutes 18% of the total population, and they both live on the mountain slopes. Learning material for the minorities is of poor quality and quantity. There is no infrastructure for their education and health-care.

Malaysia is a multiracial country; 40% of the population is illiterate. The Mongolian population is scattered all over the vast territory of Mongolia. Transportation and communications are not adequately developed in some areas. There is also the difficulty of reviving the old Mongolian script for official use, which will have an impact on learning materials. Vietnam has 53 ethnic minority groups. They are scattered in the central and mountain provinces, where the economy is underdeveloped, the climate is harsh, and transport and communications are poor. All administrative communication is in the national language, but wherever minority groups want to learn in their own language they are helped by the government. Out of the illiterate population in Myanmar, 78% belong to minority groups. There are eight major ethnic groups and 135 linguistic groups. The language policy of the country encourages teaching in indigenous languages, and some of the ethnic groups have Romanised their script. The indigenous tribal population numbers nearly 11 million in the Philippines. Out of the national figure of 2.8 million illiterates and 11.7 million functionally illiterate, the majority belong to minor communities, including Muslims.

Thailand has 554.172 hill tribe people living in 21 provinces. Thai Muslims living in the Southern part of Thailand also constitute a minority group.

India has a staggering figure of more than 1600 mother tongues, and that poses serious problems to educators, communicators and administrators. Minority groups living in geographically difficult areas like hills and mountains, forests, isolated islands, deserts, etc., remain deprived of many facilities, education being one of them. Most of the spoken languages of the minority groups do not have a script of their own. Some are Romanised, some others have adopted the script of the regional language, and some are trying to develop their own.

Conclusions and recommendations

To conduct an area-specific literacy programme of limited duration one can think of three different models:

1. A transfer model could be prepared in which there would be a transfer from the spoken language to the state or official language. The first primer would have all the words in the spoken language. The second primer would introduce some words from the state language and the third primer would be in the state language with a few words from the spoken language. This transition would require supplementary reading material to reinforce and stabilise literacy skills.

   The transfer model would be feasible only if the same script were used for the state and spoken languages.

2. A common base model could be prepared by choosing one dialect understood by all the speakers in a region of many dialects. Care would have to be taken that it reconciled socio-cul-

tural aspects. This model would require post-literacy material in the same language and script. Sometimes a new script is developed for a spoken language which has no script of its own, but this creates problems as one is not sure about the scientific development of the script. It is always better to adopt one of the existing scripts, preferably of that region. It can be slightly modified and given an identity of its own, if necessary.

3. A bilingual model could have the spoken and state language in the same primer in the same script. If the script of the spoken language is different, the primer would have two different scripts. This model would take more time and increase the teaching load.

There are also cases where learners do not want literacy skills in their spoken language, because they know that this will limit their scope and deprive them of wider communication. Such learners can be made literate in their state language because they are already motivated. They are ready to put in extra effort.

It is government policy in India to provide textbooks in the mother tongue wherever the number of people speaking a particular language is 100,000. Since India is so thickly populated, there are therefore many spoken languages which have primers and textbooks. The transition to an official language begins from class 3. The National Council of Educational Research and Training has taken up the task of providing resource support.

Special attention needs to be paid to the content of learning and to the visibility and measurability of learning. Like any other literacy programme, those for minor communities and languages also require pre-literacy materials, basic literacy materials, teaching materials and special supplementary materials. With adequate technical know-how and a human approach, however difficult it may seem, one can nonetheless hope for success.

Photo: B. Acharya / S. Verma

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»Participatory training« is on everyone's lips. But what is meant by it? The transmission of knowledge by itself does not bring about social and political change. The training of the trainers working in development projects plays a particularly important role if learning is to have such an effect. The authors present a training model in the following article.

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Binoy Acharya / Shalini Verma

Participatory training for promotion of social development

I. The context

During the last one decade or so, »training« has become a common activity in all development projects. But it needs to be recognized that the »most extensive and far reaching learning has proceeded with no trainers at all or with the trainers involved marginally and from a distance.«[1] If learning can happen without training, why is so much energy being put into training in general and participatory training in particular? Before we address this question, perhaps it is most appropriate to state that during the last decade, training has become reduced to a pre-planned technique-happy mass of simulations and role plays without any contribution to critical thinking and generation of understanding and awareness. In certain development circles, the practitioners opt for doses of training if a programme is not doing well. There are great expectations from training — »as if knowledge and action are related«.[2]

On the contrary, the work experience of an agency and its projects are often not systematically articulated and analysed for further use in action. As long as it is assumed that increasing knowledge will automatically lead to changes in action, training cannot contribute anything to the development process. Such thinking only shows a type of development which is more technical in nature. Participatory training relates to a type of development which believes in enabling the poor to gain control over their lives in a more active manner, breaks the culture of silence, gives people the confidence to express their individual and collective interests, and helps them to understand the social dynamics and identify solutions.[3]

II. Participatory training principles

Participatory training needs to be looked at separately from its generic word »training«. Participatory training is based on a value premise which believes in empowerment of the poor, including women, and believes in sustainability, ecological soundness and social justice. Participatory training cannot be carried out in every situation. It would be a mistake to understand the word »participatory« as synonymous with methods like role play, simulations and other structured exercises. No method makes training participatory or non-participatory. Participatory training is based on an article of faith among the trainers which, in turn, is biased towards the marginalized groups. Participatory training is rooted in certain basic values which are centred on poor people's participation in rebuilding their own future.

A participatory trainer does not make magic to alter social inequality. The trainer only makes an educational intervention, whereby the people start thinking about their situation.[4] Participatory training facilitates critical learning.

Agencies and projects believing in the participatory development process have concepts like »organizing«, »empowerment«, »participation«, »self-management«, »community control«, »sustainability« in their project document.

Ordinary people whose basic knowledge and experiences have been devalued and delegitimized for centuries do not feel confident enough to exercise control. They suffer from low self-esteem and their trust in themselves is shaken. The reason for this is to be found in the conventional approach to education of the poor. If poor people are considererd ignorant and if the approach is to simply feed them with information that is useful to them, it will never lead to instilling confidence or empowerment. However, this does not imply that poor people should not be provided with technical information.

To take an example of a community health programme, there may be training for health workers on how to do safe delivery, but the training will only enable the health workers to practise, if they are given the opportunity to analyse their own experiences of conducting deliveries. This would enable them to find out what is »good« and »bad« in their own practices and why there is a need to adopt new ones. This raises the self-confidence and increases the participation of the health workers. In other words, the training related to social development change does not focus on information-giving or skill-building but encourages the practitioners and people to articulate their own knowledge and need to know and learn more. This principle is the same for any programme, whether it is watershed development, forestry, income-generating activities, food security, or savings and credit.

Though participatory training is based on a set of value premises it is also built on adult learning principles. In participatory training, we hear some common statements like »start where the people are«, »learn from their experiences«, »learning is a social event«. These are nothing but principles derived for adult learning. Hence, participatory training is structured to bear in mind both value premises and adult learning principles.

The key features of this training are that:

i) It is participant-centred. It is specific to learner's learning needs.

ii) The learning focuses not only on knowledge but also on awareness and skill. This makes the learning complete, critical and useful. The combined focus of these three makes the choice of training methods complex.

iii) Learning is derived from the experiences of the participants. Experiential learning is crucial to participatory training.

iv) Participatory training requires a learning environment where participants and their experiences are valued and participants feel psychologically secure and safe to unlearn, try their new ideas and share their experiences.

v) When participation is valued, participants develop their own norms and values and take responsibility for their own learning.

vi) Since ensuring participation and building a safe environment are key requirements of participatory training, the role of trainers becomes crucial. The trainer not only believes in the participatory principles, but needs to demonstrate them as a way of life.[5].

vii) Participatory training not only helps in developing critical understanding but also appropriates the relevant and useful knowledge of the dominant system.[6]

III. Participatory training in practice

Agencies and projects that give importance to people's empowerment and control are involved in critical liberating education with the disadvantaged groups that they work with. In order to build the people's competencies, projects and agencies conduct series of training. Hence, socializing development workers in accordance with participatory principles as well as building internal competency to facilitate participatory learning are very much needed. In India, many agencies have been working towards building the competency of grassroot development agencies in participatory training.

For the past decade, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, and several regional support institutions have been involved in building competency in participatory training among grassroot groups. All these institutions individually and jointly have trained a large number of development workers in India and elsewhere in South Asia. The objectives of such programmes are (i) to build internal capacity of the grass root development agencies to facilitate participatory learning with the disadvantaged groups they work with, (ii) to help the agencies to systematize their training interventions and to create a cadre of people who believe in the participatory philosophy and to give them practice in training.

Some of the key features of participatory training elaborated here are drawn from the experiences and practices of various support organizations including UNNATI, where the authors work.[7]

The methodology used in strengthening the participatory training competencies is based on the participatory principles elaborated in the previous section. It is based on experiential learning and building the internal competencies of the development workers so that they emerge as participatory trainers. The training includes modules like:

i) Why do we do training — Role of training in social change

ii) Developing insights into how disadvantaged people learn

iii) Developing insights into group behaviour — group process and dynamics

iv) Self-development of trainers

v) Developing an understanding of the effective use of training methods

vi) Training design

vii) Developing facilitation skills

These seven primary modules are taken up in a three-phase training programme. The first and third phases are residential programmes lasting eight days each. Between the first and the third phase, there is a gap of four months. During this period the participants make use of some of the principles they have learnt in the first phase. This is the second phase. This phase also provides a chance to articulate the learning needs of a trainer. While the first phase is devoted to understanding the methodological principles

experience of participants	→	● training for change ● participatory principles ● group process ● self-development ● training methods ● training design	→	●practice	→	● articulation of participatory training ● sharpen trainer skills ● facilitation of group learning

of training, the third phase is spent in developing skills to practise those principles. However, in both phases, experience, analysis and articulation are in-built. In the first phase, the participants enter into the learning situation with individual identity. But as they are encouraged to learn from each other's experiences, the purpose of understanding the value and strength of experimental learning is met. From the analysis of their own collective learning process, the participants derive insights into group processes. From the trainer's behaviour and facilitation, the participants derive insights into the role of the trainer and facilitation skills. During the whole training, the trainer performs as a model learner, trainer and practitioner of participatory training. Besides the content of the programme, the process of training is very important. We have found that the participants learn more from the training process and trainers' behaviour than from the content per se. The seven key modules are as follows:

1. Role of training

There are polarised opinions on the role of training in the social change and development process. As practitioners of participatory training, we need to develop a balanced understanding of its role. When training is understood as a structured, deliberate, directed and purposive learning intervention, it makes the learning focused. In a participatory learning perspective, it provides learning on the daily issues central to the life of the people who are undergoing the learning and also helps the people to critically look into their experiences. The process helps the learner to acquire faith in him/her-self. The content of the training is of little value if the training does not create an environment where the learners feel confident enough to share and analyse their experiences. Participatory training does not provide information and skill alone but breaks the »culture of silence«. People, particularly the poor, who undergo participatory training of any nature need to get structured space to gain confidence. Making people feel empowered and capable in a learning context enables them to practise in their own real life context. Besides this, learning in a group provides a microcosm of group functioning for the participants. From the training, the participants discover the relevance of the »group« and understand the norms, values and principles of group-building which later can be used in organizing themselves.

2. How adults learn

Insights into the learning process of adults can help in structuring the learning programme. People often avoid structured learning as it requires unlearning, which is painful. Learning creates several emotional feelings like stress, anxiety, fear, confusion, agitation and happiness. It has been found that people learn best when learning is useful, relaxing, concrete and when their own experiences and understanding are valued. Such an understanding helps in building an appropriate learning environment and in preparation of the trainer. This module highlights the importance of the learning process rather the content. Developing insights into the issue of why people do not participate in learning as well as in the development process is crucial for a trainer. If people are treated as objects rather than as active participants they feel alienated. Adults participate best in learning when they are given a safe, supportive and accepting environment in which to express and take action.

3. Group process

The group is basic to experiential learning and action for change. Thus there is a need to understand how a group performs its tasks while maintaining its group identity. There is also a need to understand the process of participation, communication, leadership building, conflict resolution and decision making in the group while its members are undergoing learning. Any inability to recognize these processes creates a problem in helping the group to get involved in the learning. Therefore, the trainer's insights into the group process is essential in order to facilitate collective learning.

4. Self-development of the trainer

»Knowing oneself is the basis for knowing others.« Since, during the training, the trainer needs to know how the participants are feeling, how comfortable they are in pursuing learning, whether their experience and knowledge are being valued, the trainer needs to know himself/herself completely. Without this, the trainer might impose herself/himself, her/his own views, pressures, anxieties and tentativeness on the participants. Hence, the trainer needs to undergo an analysis of his/her own understanding of micro and macro reality and perspective on social development and change, to be clear about his/her likes and dislikes and to have sensitivity towards gender, communal, cultural, racial and caste issues. The trainer needs to be clearly aware of her/his own self-concept and needs to respect him/herself. Having a balanced understanding of oneself helps in understanding others in a similar »situation«. As it is said, if you are sensitive to your own needs it helps in developing sensitivity towards others. Self-understanding and self-development are crucial to a trainer's overall development.

5. Training methods

Since participatory training focuses on knowledge, awareness and skill development, the methods used are consistent with the focus of learning. The methods used in the training are lecture, group discussion, simulation, role play, case analysis and practice and other variations of these major methods. Besides focusing on learning in the choice of methods, there is also a need to keep in mind participant's sustained involvement, to value learners' experiences and to enable them to build groups. Methods should contribute to learning, they should not be a bag of tricks and games used to entertain the learners. In fact, the entertainment value has become so over-popularized in recent times that it has made participatory training synonymous with fun and having a good time rather than critical and liberating learning.

6. Training design

»Developing an appropriate design for the learning objectives of a group of learners is one of the most creative and challenging first steps in any training.«[8] But many trainers feel that in participatory training one should not develop a pre-planned design. Such thinking only leads to blurring of training objectives and lack of preparation by the trainer. A participatory trainer ought to know about the background and learning needs of the participants. The trainer should also be clear about the organizational and socio-economic context of a particular training course. Based on this preliminary understanding, a training design should be prepared which includes articulation of training objectives, spelling out the contents and its sequencing and selecting appropriate learning methods. Once a design is prepared, the trainer can prepare for each session. But each design needs to be re-examined jointly with the participants, taking into account their articulated learning needs and training objectives. The steps in the preparation of a design are identifying learning needs → setting objectives → spelling out content → sequencing → identifying methods.

This helps in breaking the trainers' frequent obsession with methods and technique. Many trainers first look for an attractive method and then identify the content. This approach makes participatory training into a series of games without contributing to learning. Hence, competency in training design preparation is an essential skill.

7. Facilitation

In participatory training, the trainer facilitates group learning. Small group facilitation does not have one single theory or conceptual basis but can use a diversity of approaches.[9]

In participatory training, one enables individuals as well as the group to develop understanding and awareness. In a training situation, an individual or the group as a whole may get stuck in arriving at cognitive understanding or may show resistance or blocks in relation to the learning issues. In these situations, the trainer makes facilitative interventions. The facilitating styles can be »interactive«, »inclusive«, »intrusive« and »interpretive«. The mix of different styles is helpful in a mix of learning goals, differential trainer personalities and various stages of group development. However, one needs to understand various approaches to facilitation such as psychoanalytic, NTL, Esalen Rogerian models, etc. The individual models are very powerful methods and grassroot trainers may not develop the competenccy to handle them. We have found that grassroot workers find it easy to use a mix of styles in promoting collective learning.

All the above learning themes are carried out with the use of a variety of methods such as analysis of participants' experiences, analysis of cases and analysis of simulated experiences with adequate input to sharpen the theoretical base.

Training design adopted during 1993 for Gujarat based NGOs

days	*phase*	*methods*
	phase I	
1	• setting the context of the training	
	• introduction of participants	• dyads
	• rearticulation of learning needs	• group work
	• spelling out the objectives of training	
	• understanding training and participatory training	• group distinction
2	• understanding participatory training (continued)	• group work
		• self-study
		• consolidation
3	• articulation of participatory training principles	• group work
		• consolidation
	• role of trainer	• group distinction
	• small group dynamics and processes	• simulation, role play
4	• small group process (cont.)	• video review
	• inter-group process	• exercise
	• mid-term review	• open verbal
5	• trainers' capacities	• exercise
	• trust, respect, gender	
6	• self-awarness and dev.	• reflection
7	• training design	• case analysis
	• training methods	• demonstrations and analysis
8	• follow-up planning	• group work
	• evaluation	• open & ques.

phase II

Participants practice training at their work place and review their performance. Trainers help the participants during the training.

phase III

phase	*methods*
• analysis of training experience	• group work
• training design preparation	• group work
• training design preparation	• case work
• use of training methods	• practice in group • video review
• facilitation	• group work • video review • lecture
• training evaluation, follow up, report	• case study
• insight into gender issues, trainer authority, team work, participation	• guided group work
• self-development of trainer	• group discussion • lecture
• participatory training philosophy	• group discussion
• follow-up planning	• group work
• evaluation	• open
• closure	

IV. Impact at the grassroots

Though we have not undertaken any formal study to assess the impact of training to build trainers' competencies in participatory training, we have witnessed some of its use at the grassroots.

The first and foremost important change is that the grassroot trainers have been able to understand why people do not participate. They realize the dangers of the »imparting« model of educating people. There is an increased understanding of the need to exploit experiences an to use a mutual, learner-centred and interactive model of learning. Training has helped them to promote participation in the programmes as well as to derive people's knowledge to make programmes people-centred and locally relevant.

The second nature of the impact is an increase in the grassroot workers' faith in people's knowledge. The practitioners see and value the wide range of knowledge and resources people have. This breaks the dependence on external resource persons and experts. The trainers do value expert knowledge, but integrate it critically with people's knowledge-base. This training enhances understanding and insight into development issues.

The third nature of the impact is in terms of self-development. Development practitioners' examination, evaluation and assessment of their people-centred values in learning helps them to develop as individuals sensitive to poor people and their needs. The critical re-examination of social conditions also helps the practitioners to develop a concrete, practical, dynamic approach to social development. In sum, participatory training not only promotes people's participation, but creates alternatives to social development frameworks at the micro level and helps to build development workers committed to the empowerment of the poor.

References and notes

1. Lynton, Rolf P. and Udai Pareek, Training for Development, Kumarian Press, Connecticut, U.S.A., 1980.
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3. Srivastava, Om and Tandon, Rajesh (ed), Participatory Training for Rural Development, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, 1987.
4. Freire, Paulo, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, The Continuum Publishers, New York, 1985.
5. Dhar, Suneeta, et al, Training of Trainers — A Manual for Participatory Training Methodology in Development, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, 1987.
6. Tandon, Rajesh, Social Transformation and Participatory Research, Convergence, Vol. 2, No. 2 - 3, 1988.
7. UNNATI — Organisation for Development Education, where the authors work, is actively involved in promoting participatory training. During the last three years, UNNATI has trained 90 development workers from 30 development agencies in the State of Gujarat, India. UNNATI has taken the initiative of developing an informal Participatory Training Network in Gujarat to share training experiences. This network is a collective of development workers of Gujarat who have attended participatory training by UNNATI and PRIA.
8. Dhar, Ibid.
9. Ashkenas, R. and Tandon, Rajesh, An Eclectic Approach to Small Group Facilitation (Mimeo), Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi.

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